Women and Gender in the Early Modern Low Countries, 1500–1750

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Acknowledgments

This volume grew out of a two-day conference organized by the editors and held at the Rubenanium in Antwerp, Belgium, in 2015. The interdisciplinary event brought together twenty-six international scholars to present their current research on various aspects of women and gender in the early modern Low Countries, investigations whose subjects ranged from Dutch women playwrights and religious activists, to Flemish nuns and patrons of the arts, to gendered tropes in art and literature and women's agency across the region. It was our hope to spark new conversations across disciplines and, in particular, across the historical and historiographical rift that often keeps separate scholarly discussions on the Northern Protestant United Provinces (the present-day Netherlands) from those on the Catholic South (roughly, Belgium and Luxembourg). Whatever success we found in this quest would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, creativity, and support of many others.

The editors first wish to express our indebtedness to all of the conference participants: our panel chairs Ellen Decraene, Lia van Gemert, Anne-Laure van Bruaene, Julie de Groot, Aaron Hyman, and Bert Watteeuw; panelists Mirjam de Baar, Manon van der Heijden, Frima Fox Hofrichter, Tine de Moor, Andrea Pearson, Patricia Stoop, Danielle van den Heuvel, Cordula van Wyhe, and Ping-Yuan Wang, all of whom made stimulating contributions with their papers. Panelists Martha Moffitt Peacock, Martine van Elk, Margit Thøfner, Katlijne Van der Stighelen, and our keynote speakers Martha Howell and Diane Wolfthal all too gave thought-provoking presentations and have joined us in creating this volume by contributing chapters as varied as they are thoughtfully researched and insightful. We thank the latter group for their commitment to the project as they stuck with us through rounds of editing and generously circulated their ideas.

It is also our pleasure to acknowledge others whose help and support have made this project possible, first and foremost Véronique van de Kerckhof, Director of the Rubenianum, for generously making the beautiful host venue available, and to herself and Bert Watteeuw, Lieneke Nijkamp, and Ute Staes for assisting with organization. Anne-Laure van Bruaene, Katlijne Van der Stighelen, and Luc Duerloo all served on the project's steering committee as we sought funding, which was provided by the University of Antwerp, FWO Vlaanderen, and the King Baudouin Foundation. Luc Duerloo and Diane Wolfthal were also especially helpful in planning and making funding applications. Thanks also to research assistant, Brittany Smith, for helping with the preparation of the index. UNC Charlotte hosted our conference website and gave technical

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support, and Amanda Pipkin would also like to thank the University's College of Liberal Arts and Science and Office of International Programs for offering travel funding. Sarah Moran would like to express her gratitude to the EURIAS program and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, where she wrote her chapter for this volume during a fellowship residency. And a very special thanks go to the staff at Brill, especially Ivo Romein and Arjan van Dijk, to the anonymous referees for their helpful comments, and to Andrew Gow for selecting our volume for the *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions* series.

Last but not least, we would like to acknowledge the many museums and collections who provided visual material for this volume, and in particular those institutions who are leading the way towards making scholarly research more accessible by doing away with image rights fees; among them is the Saint Louis Art Museum, whose *Account Keeper* by Nicolaes Maes (1656) graces our cover. We began this project with the aim of continuing to pull back the curtains of historical erasure from early modern women by demonstrating, in a comprehensive and comparative way, that Low Countries women not only shaped the domestic sphere but also played enormously varied roles in a dynamic environment of economic, artistic, and cultural exchange, and furthermore by showing that the study of these women across the political and religious border created by the Dutch Revolt offers opportunities for novel and fundamental historical research. Maes's *Account Keeper* speaks, we think, to both of these points, as well as to the complex intersections of representation and reality with which our authors grapple, and we are thus grateful that we could make it the 'face' of our collective work.

The painting presents a quiet interior in which a lone middle-aged woman, dressed modestly but well, sits bent over heavy ledgers, pen in hand and mouth slightly open as though talking to herself as she crunches the numbers. The size of the ledgers implies a large commercial undertaking, while the map hung on the wall behind her suggests a business with global interests.[1] Though the exact historical meanings of the image are elusive, the *Account Keeper* engages in none of the negative stereotypes of femininity that are well-known to scholars but rather exudes female competence and right judgment, and speaks to the very ordinariness of women's work in the 'male' spheres of money and trade in the Low Countries during this period. Moreover, the work itself is a product of movement across the North/South border, as Maes was a Dutch student of Rembrandt whose work was transformed during the time he spent

1 For an introduction to the debate surrounding this painting see Basil Selig Yamey, *Art and Accounting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 97–101.

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in Antwerp studying the works of Flemish masters of the previous generation. And of course, we cannot help but see echoes of our own work as scholars in the account keeper's diligent attention to her books, as we reckon with our own sources and try to come up with a fair accounting of the experiences of her contemporaries. It is our sincere hope that *Women and Gender in the Early Modern Low Countries* has shed some valuable light on its subjects, and that it will encourage both new research in this area and further exchange among scholars working across disciplinary and political borders.

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pamphlets, plays, poems, and advice manuals. She has also published articles on seventeenth-century Dutch culture in the *Journal of Early Modern History* and in *Tijdschrijft voor Geschiedenis*. Her new book-length project highlights women's contributions to the spread of the Reformed faith across Europe from 1550–1700, by detailing their teachings, efforts to convert unbelievers, organization of informal church services, participation in international debate, and encouragement of their fellow Calvinists abroad.

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Introduction

Sarah Joan Moran and Amanda Pipkin

The Low Countries, a region comprising modern-day Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and parts of eastern Germany and northern France, offers a remarkable laboratory for the study of early modern religion, politics, and culture. Under the domain of the Hapsburg empire from 1482 and allocated to the Spanish crown when Holy Roman Emperor Charles V abdicated in 1555, the Low Countries were highly urbanized, literate, and cosmopolitan, and their cities were among the most important trade centers in Northern Europe. Following the publication of Luther's 98 theses in 1517 the region also proved fertile ground for the spread of Protestant ideas, which combined with local resentment of foreign rule culminated in rebellion against Spain in 1568. This marked the start of the Eighty Years War.[1] Philip II reestablished control over most of the Southern provinces around 1585 but neither he nor his successors were able to re-take the North. As war waged on for another six decades the South saw a wave of Catholic revival while Reformed evangelism flourished in the new Dutch Republic, entrenching a religious and political divide that slowly crushed the dreams of those hoping to reunite the Low Countries.[2] Following the War of the Spanish Succession, under the Treaty of Rastatt in 1714 the Southern provinces were transferred back to the Austrian Habsburg emperors, and both North and South underwent economic declines as they

1 See Jonathan Irvine Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Arie-Jan Gelderblom, Jan L. de Jong, and M. van Vaeck, eds., *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004); J. C. H. Blom and E. Lamberts, eds., *History of the Low Countries*. Translated by James C. Kennedy (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014); Alastair Duke and Judith Pollmann, "Reformations and Revolt in the Netherlands, 1500–1621" in *Oxford Bibliographies, Renaissance and Reformation* (http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0181.xml#firstMatch); James D. Tracy, "With and Without the Counter-Reformation: The Catholic Church in the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch Republic, 1580–1650, A Review of the Literature since 1945," in *The Low Countries in the Sixteenth Century: Erasmus, Religion and Politics, Trade and Finance*, ed. James D. Tracy (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2005), 547–575.

2 Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520–1635* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: Hambledon, 2003); Peter J. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

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struggled with new political and economic realities.[3] Yet throughout these centuries Low Countries inhabitants continued to consider themselves collectively 'Nederlanders' sharing common cultural roots and language (among the Dutch speakers of the Northern provinces and the two largest Southern provinces, Flanders and Brabant, at least), and they travelled easily across the border.[4]

Those cultural roots included attitudes towards women and gender that were among the more female-friendly in Western Europe and were exceptional in the degree to which they located women in the 'masculine' spheres of public space and business. The Italian humanist Ludovico Guicciardini, for example, remarked in 1567 on the ubiquitous presence of women in the Antwerp markets, condemning the practice of women buying and selling goods as corrupting to female virtue and recording his surprise that Antwerpians had no problem with the situation.[5] The levels of education for girls, especially in the Duchy of Brabant, were markedly high, and legal statutes ensured that wives maintained certain property rights despite being under coverture and in Holland and Flanders gave single adult women the same contractual rights

3 See Israel, *The Dutch Republic*; Hervé Hasquin, *Oostenrijks België, 1713–1794: de Zuidelijke Nederlanden onder de Oostenrijkse Habsburgers* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1987); Jan Craeybeckx and F. G. Scheelings. *De Franse Revolutie en Vlaanderen: de Oostenrijkse Nederlanden tussen oud en nieuw regime/La Révolution française et la Flandre: les Pays-Bas autrichiens entre l'ancien et le nouveau régime* (Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel Press, 1990).

4 For more details on Netherlandish identities during our period, see Alastair Duke, "In Defence of the Common Fatherland. Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555–1576," 217–239 and Judith Pollmann, "No Man's Land. Reinventing Netherlandish Identities, 1585–1621," 241–259 in Robert Stein and Judith Pollmann, *Networks, Regions and Nations Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300–1650* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010); Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewis, eds., *Calvinism in Europe, 1540–1620* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 175–197; Judith Pollmann, "'Brabanters do fairly resemble Spaniards after all.' Memory, Propaganda and Identity in the Twelve Years' Truce," in Alastair Duke, Judith Pollmann, and Andrew Spicer, *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 211–227; and Sarah Joan Moran, "'The Right Hand of Pictura's Perfection': Cornelis de Bie's Het Gulden Cabinet and Antwerp Art in the 1660s," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 64 (2014): 370–399. On mobility across the North/South boundary see Karolien de Clippel and Filip Vermeylen, "In Search of Netherlandish Art: Cultural Transmission and Artistic Exchanges in the Low Countries, an Introduction," *De zeventiende eeuw*, 31 (2015), 2–17.

5 Ludovico Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania inferiore* (Antwerp: Guglielmo Silvio, 1567), 54, 333; .Anon., *Le Mercure de la Gaule Belgique* (Cologne and Paris: 1682), 28–29; Peter Burke, "Antwerp, a Metropolis in Europe," in *Antwerp, Story of a Metropolis: 16th–17th century*, ed. Jan van der Stock (Gent: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1993), 61; D. Christopher Gabbard, "Gender Stereotyping in Early Modern Travel Writing on Holland," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 43 (2003).

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and responsibilities as men.[6] This is not to say that Low Countries women were not constricted by patriarchal norms (an issue which Howell discusses at length in her piece in this volume), but rather to point out that their range of activity was wider than historians often assume, and that their legal capacitation means that they are well-represented in Low Countries archives, where countless wills, contracts, legal proceedings, and testimonies offer traces of women's lives.

Because of its particular history, the Low Countries thus offers unique opportunities to investigate the impact of the dramatic religious and political shifts that shaped sixteenth- and seventeenth- century Europe while controlling – to some extent – for underlying cultural differences, as well as abundant sources for the study of early modern women. The present interdisciplinary volume

6 For education, see Eddy Put, *De cleijne schoolen: Het volksonderwijs in het hertogdom Brabant tussen Katholieke Reformatie en verlichting, eind 16de eeuw – 1795* (Leuven: University of Leuven, 1990); Maurits De Vroede, *Meesters en meesteressen: Een sociale geschiedenis van de leerkrachten lager onderwijs in België*, 3 vols., vol. 1. Het Ancien Règime (Leuven: University of Leuven, 1999); Lodewijk Jozef Maria Philippen, *Het volksonderwijs in onze middeleeuwsche steden inzonderheid te Antwerpen 1200–1563*, Verhandelingen van de Algemeene katholieke Vlaamsche hoogeschooluitbreiding (Antwerp: Kiliaan, 1920); De Vroede, *Religieuses et béguines enseignantes dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux et la principauté de Liège aux XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles*, vol. 20, Studia paedagogica, nieuwe reeks (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996); Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, "'Every Woman Counts': A Gender-Analysis of Numeracy in the Low Countries during the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 41, no. 2 (2010); Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Girl power: The European marriage pattern and labour markets in the North Sea region in the late medieval and early modern period," *The Economic History Review* 63, no. 1 (2010); Marc Boone, Thérèse de Hemptinne, and Walter Prevenier, "Gender and Early Emancipation in the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period," in *Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (New York: Routledge, 2014), 25; Erika Kuijpers, "Lezen en schrijven. Onderzoek naar het alfabetiseringsniveau in zeventiende eeuws Amsterdam," *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 23 (1997): 490–522, see especially p. 507.

Women's property and contractual rights were set out in the inheritance, marriage and property statutes published in the *Coutumes* for various cities and provinces, many of which are now available online. In addition to the texts by De Moor and Van Zanden above, secondary sources include John Gilissen, *Le statut de la femme dans l'ancien droit belge*, vol. 12, Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions (Brussels: Éditions de la librairie encyclopédique, 1962), 255–57; Laura Van Aert, "Tussen norm en praktijk. Een terreinverkenning over het juridische statuut van vrouwen in het 16de-eeuwse Antwerpen," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 2, no. 3 (2005): 22–42; Moran, "Bringing the Counter-Reformation Home: The Domestic Use of Artworks at the Antwerp Beguinage in the Seventeenth Century," *Simiolus* 38, no. 3 (2016): 144–158; Ariadne Schmidt, "Generous Provisions or Legitimate Shares? Widows and the Transfer of Property in 17th-century Holland," *The History of the Family* 15, no. 1 (2010): 13–24.

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aims to activate, for the first time, both of these advantages for historical research by bringing together studies that address women's experiences within social hierarchies, as family members, before the law, and as authors, artists, and patrons, as well as the formulation and shaping of gendered discourse in art and literature across the North/South divide. In addition to presenting new insights on women and gender in studies that stem from several historical subfields, including religious, social, art, and literary history, and highlighting the importance of the region for the international debates on women's history, the editors hope that this volume makes some headway in closing some of the current clefts that exist between researchers in the Netherlands and in Belgium so that both sides may better benefit from each other's work.

1 The Historiographical Landscape

The historical scholarship on the Low Countries before the Revolt covering the period from the rapid urbanization in the High Middle Ages through the first half of the sixteenth century constitutes a varied and dynamic body of literature, in which Dutch, Belgian, and international scholars engage in vibrant discussions. Prominent within this research are studies of women, in particular nuns, beguines and mystics, as well as laywomen and their roles in the social fabric of cities. Among the most comprehensive and impactful of these are Martha Howell's 1998 *The Marriage Exchange: Property, Social Place, and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1300–1550*, Walter Simons's *Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565* of 2001, *The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in the Southern Low Countries* (edited by Ellen E. Kittel and Mary A. Suydam, 2004), and Shennan Hutton's recent (2016) *Women and Economic Activities in Late Medieval Ghent*.[7] Also important within this

7 Other examples include Wybren Scheepsma, "Mystical Networks in the Middle Ages? On the First Women Writers in Dutch and their Literary Contacts, in *"I Have Heard about You": Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf*, edited by Suzan van Dijk (Hilversum, The Netherlands: Verloren, 2004), Wybren Scheepsma, Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries. The Modern Devotion, the Canonesses of Windesheim, and Their Writings (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 2004), 2–16, Patricia Stoop, "Sermon-Writing Women Fifteenth-Century Vernacular Sermons from the Augustinian Convent of Jericho in Brussels," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 38, no. 2 (2012), Thom Mertens, "Ghostwriting Sisters. The Preservation of Dutch Sermons of Father Confessors in the Fifteenth and the Early Sixteenth Century," in *Seeing and Knowing: Women and Learning in Medieval Europe 1200–1500*, ed. Anneke Mulder-Bakker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), Jan Van Gerven, "Vrouwen, arbeid en sociale positie. Een voorlopig onderzoek naar

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literature is work on the three women regents who governed the Low Countries under their Habsburg emperors for nearly all of the sixteenth century leading up to the Revolt: Margaret of Austria (governed 1507–1515, 1519–1530), Mary of Hungary (g. 1531–1555), and Margaret of Parma (g. 1559–1567). The first two have been celebrated in major exhibitions, with catalogues published in several languages, and all have been the subject of books and articles.[8]

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de economische rol en maatschappelijke positie van vrouwen in de Brabantse steden in de late Middeleeuwen." *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 73, no. 4 (1995); Ariane Tierssoone, "Vrouwen, criminaliteit en vrouwencriminaliteit in Antwerpen in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw" (MA (licentiaat) thesis, University of Ghent, 1998); Jan van Gerven, "Vrouwen, arbeid en sociale positie. Een voorlopig onderzoek naar de economische rol en maatschappelijke positie van vrouwen in de Brabantse steden in de late middeleeuwen," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 73 (1995): 947–966; and the voluminous literature on the poet Anna Bijns (a few examples: Kessler, Judith. *Princesse der rederijkers: Het oeuvre van Anna Bijns* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2013); Herman Pleij, *Anna Bijns, van Antwerpen* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2011); Judith Pollmann, ""Each Should Tend His Own Garden": Anna Bijns and the Catholic Polemic against the Reformation," *Church History and Religious Culture* 87, no. 1 (2007). Also useful, though not focused on women, are studies of economic and social structure such as Bas van Bavel's, *Manors and Markets: Economy and Society in the Low Countries, 500–1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

8 The exhibition catalogs are Dagmar Eichberger and Yvonne Bleyerveld, eds., *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2005); Réthelyi, Orsolya, ed. *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and her Court 1521–1531* (Budapest: Budapest History Museum, 2005); and Bertrand Federinov and Gilles Docquier, eds., *Marie de Hongrie: Politique et culture sous la Renaissance aux Pays-Bas* (Morlanwelz-Mariemont: Musée Royal de Mariemont, 2008). See also Eleanor E. Tremayne, *The First Governess of the Netherlands: Margaret of Austria*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, and London: Methuene, 1908); Iongh, Jane de. *Mary of Hungary: Second Regent of the Netherlands* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959); Charlie R. Steen, *Margaret of Parma: A Life* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Massimo Sargiacomo, "Accounting and the 'Art of Government': Margaret of Austria in Abruzzo (1539–86)," *European Accounting Review* 17, no. 4 (2008); Krista De Jonge, "A Model Court Architect: Mary of Hungary and Jacques Du Broeucq (1545–1556)," in *Sponsors of the Past: Flemish Art and Patronage 1550–1700*, edited by Hans Vlieghe and Katlijne Van Der Stighelen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); Seishiro Niwa, "'Madama' Margaret of Parma's Patronage of Music," *Early Music* 33, no. 1 (2005); Lorraine Attreed, "Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy in the Early Career of Margaret of Austria (1480–1530)," *Mediterranean Studies* 20, no. 1 (2012); Xander van Eck, "Margaret of Parma's Gift of a Window to St John's in Gouda and the Art of the Early Counter-reformation in the Low Countries," *Simiolus* 30, no. 1 (2012); Dagmar Eichberger and Lisa Beaven, "Family Members and Political Allies: The Portrait Collection of Margaret of Austria," *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 2 (1995); Deanna MacDonald, "Collecting a New World: The Ethnographic Collections of Margaret of Austria," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 33, no. 3 (2002); Andrea Pearson, "Personal Worship, Gender, and the Devotional Portrait Diptych," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1, Special Edition: Gender in Early Modern Europe (2000), and "Margaret of Austria's Devotional Portrait Diptychs," *Woman's Art Journal* 22, no. 2 (2002).

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But from the mid-sixteenth century onwards the scholarship begins to diverge, with work on the early modern Northern Low Countries typically done by Dutch scholars and work on the South by Belgians. They tend to operate within separate scholarly spheres (though there are important exceptions), and trends in early modern studies, and of women within that framework, have thus evolved fairly independently on either side of the border. Furthermore, among the foreign early modernists who study the region – and have the language skills to both research in Dutch sources and publish in English for a broader audience – far more gravitate towards the independent, Protestant Northern United Provinces than the Spanish-controlled Catholic South. The North is thus better known internationally, while a language barrier has reduced opportunities for methodological cross-pollination in the study of the South. We here sketch out the broad trends and lacunae in the scholarship as it relates to women and gender on each side of the border.

2 Studying Early Modern Women and Gender in the Northern Low Countries

On the Northern side scholarship on women has taken off in the last twenty years among both Dutch and American scholars, who have highlighted women's ability to engage in the public sphere in skilled economic production and trade, as wives of regents and as regentesses of institutions that helped take care of the sick, needy, and elderly, and by circulating their literary and artistic works.[9] Much research has also been dedicated to Dutch women's legal status

9 For women in production and trades see Martha Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Els Kloek, "Vrouwenarbeide aan banden gelegd? De arbeidsdeling naar sekse volgens de keurboeken van de oude draperie, ca. 1380–1580" in *Wie hij zij, man of wijf. Vrouwengeschiedenis en de vroegmoderne tijd: Drie Leidse studies* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), 48–77; Ariadne Schmidt, "Zelfstandig en bevoogd: speelruimte van vrouwen rond 1650," *Tijdschrift Voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 29 (2003): 28–34; Van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship*; Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, *De draad in eigen handen: vrouwen en loonarbeid in de Nederlandse textielnijverheid, 1581–1810* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007); Schmidt, "Gilden en de toegang van vrouwen tot de arbeidsmarkt in Holland in de vroegmoderne tijd" *De zeventiende eeuw* 23 (2007): 161–178.

For regents' wives and regentesses see: Judith Hokke, "Mijn Alderliefste Jantielief,' Vrouw En Gezin in de Republiek: Regentenvrouwen En Hun Relaties," in *Vrouwenlevens 1500–1850*, edited by Ulla Jansz, Annemarie de Wildt, Mirjam de Baar, Francisca de Haan, Dineke Stam, Lilian de Bruijn, and Fia Dieteren (Nijmegen: SUN, 1987), 45–73; Michiel Jonker, "Public or

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and position within marriage,[10] and women and their labor have been highlighted within broader popular historical narratives about Dutch identity as rooted in the emergence of capitalism.[11] We know that poorer Dutch women struggled to provide for their households, some times turning to prostitution,

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Private Portraits: Group Portraits of Amsterdam Regents and Regentesses," in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age. Ed. by Arthur K. Wheelock and Adele Seeff*, 206–226; Petrus Cornelis Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience: Disciplinary Institutions and Their Inmates in Early Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

For an overview of literary women see: Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen and K. Porteman, *Met en zonder lauwerkrans: schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850: van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar: teksten met inleiding en commentaar* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997); Lia van Gemert, Myra J. Heerspink Scholz, and Paul Vincent, *Women's writing from the Low Countries 1200–1875: a bilingual anthology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Annelies de Jeu, *'t spoor der dichteressen: netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000). See also the Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland (http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/DVN) and Women Writers' Networks (http://www.womenwriters.nl/index.php/Women_writers%27_networks). Martine van Elk, *Early Modern Women's Writing: Domesticity, Privacy, and the Public Sphere in England and the Dutch Republic* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, Springer International Publishing AG, 2017).

10 Alice Clare Carter, "Marriage Counseling in the Early Seventeenth Century: England and the Netherlands Compared," in *Ten Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations*, ed. Jan A. van Dorsten (Leiden; London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Donald Haks, *Huwelijk en Gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1982); Manon van der Heijden, *Huwelijk in Holland: stedelijk rechtspraak en kerkelijk tucht, 1550–1700* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1998); Sherrin Marshall, *The Dutch Gentry, 1500–1650: Family, Faith, and Fortune* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Ariadne Schmidt, "Gelijk hebben, gelijk krijgen? Vrouwen en vertrouwen in het recht in Holland in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw," in *Het Gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw. Recht, onrecht en reputatie in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, eds. Michiel van Groesen, Pollmann, and Hans Cools (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014); Manon Van der Heijden, "Marriage formation: law and custom in the Low Countries, 1500–1700" in Silvana Seidel Menchi and Emlyn Eisenach, eds., *Marriage in Europe, 1400–1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

11 See Tine de Moor and Jan. L.van Zanden, *Vrouwen en de geboorte van het kapitalisme in West-Europa* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2006); Marjolein van Dekken, *Brouwen, branden en bedienen: productie en verkoop van drank door vrouwen in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, circa 1500–1800* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2010); Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship. Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands, c. 1580–1815* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007).

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cross-dressing as men, or other criminal activity.[12] Some of those marginalized faced accusations of witchcraft and prior to 1609 possibly execution.[13]

Representations of women have also featured prominently in Dutch art history, owing in part to the seventeenth-century popularity of the painted domestic interiors and satirical genre scenes that prominently feature wives and female servants at work and at leisure. It is now a commonplace in the field that the women in these images played moralizing roles, standing either for the virtue of a well-run household and orderly Dutch society in general, or the dangers of moral corruption.[14] Art historians including our contributors Diane Wolfthal and Martha Moffitt Peacock have further examined the impacts that violent or heroic images of women had on women's and men's everyday lives.[15]

12 Marybeth Carlson, "Domestic Service in a Changing City Economy: Rotterdam, 1680–1780," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1993); Manon Van der Heijden and Danielle van den Heuvel, "Sailors' Families and the Urban Institutional Framework in Early Modern Holland," *The History of the Family* 12 (2007), and "Broken Families: Economic Resources and Social Networks of Women Who Head Families," *The History of The Family* 12 (2007): 223–32; Lotte van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams hoerdom: prostitutie in de zeventiende en achtiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1996); Rudolf Dekker and Van de Pol, *Daar was laatst een meisje loos: Nederlandse vrouwen als matrozen en soldaten: een historisch onderzoek* (Baarn: Ambo, 1981); Kloek, "Criminaliteit en sekse in de confessieboeken, 1678–1794" in *Wie hij zij, man of wijf, 122–158*; Peacock, "The Amsterdam Spinhuis and the 'Art' of Correction" in *Crime and Punishment in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Mental-Historical Investigations of Basic Human Problems and Social Responses, eds.*, Albrecht Classen and Connie L. Scarborough (Berlin; Boston: de Gruyter, 2012); Van der Heijden, *Misdadige vrouwen: criminaliteit en rechtspraak in Holland 1600–1800* (Amsterdam: Prometeheus Bert Bakker, 2014).

13 Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff, *Witchcraft in the Netherlands: From the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Rotterdam: Universitaire Pers, 1991); Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013), 280. For depictions of witches in Dutch art see: Claudia Swan, *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Linda C. Hults, *The Witch as Muse: Art, Gender, and Power in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

14 See for example Mariët Westermann, *A Worldly Art: The Dutch Republic, 1585–1718* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), and Wayne E. Franits, *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For the depiction of wives in portraiture see Eddy de Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw: huwelijk en gezin in de Nederlandse kunst van de zeventiende eeuw* (Zwolle; Haarlem: Waanders; Frans Halsmuseum, 1986).

15 Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Out of the Kitchen and into the Fire: The Dutch Heroine Tradition," in *War and Peace Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011); Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The Heroic Tradition and Its Alternatives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Marike Meijer Drees, "Vaderlandse heldinnen in belegeringstoneelstukken," *De nieuwe taalgids*

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Women artists also figure in the Dutch art-historiography, and a good overview is offered in three volumes from the late 1990s: *Vrouwen en kunst in de republiek* (1998, edited by Els Kloek, Catherine Peters Sengers, and Esther Tobé), which focuses on Northern women, and two anthology-style catalogs that include both women artists from both North and South (*Oude meesteressen: Vrouwelijke kunstnaars in de Nederlanden*, edited by Leen Huet and Jan Grieten, 1998, and *Elck zijn waerom. Vrouwelijke kunstenaars in Belgie en Nederland 1500–1950/À chacun sa grâce: femmes artistes en Belgique et aux Pays-Bas 1500–1950*, edited by Katlijne Van der Stighelen, Mirjam Westen, and Maaike Meijer, 1999). Exhibitions have also been dedicated to the portrait and genre painter Judith Leyster and to Maria Sibylla Merian, the most important producer of entomological illustrations in the seventeenth century.[16] Literary historians have also highlighted women writers, most prominently the illustrious Anna Maria van Schurman,[17] and some, including our volume's contributor Martine van Elk, have also underscored Dutch women's international connections throughout the supra-national Republic of Letters.[18] Others have

85, no. 1 (1992), 71–82; Elizabeth Alice Honig, "Desire and Domestic Economy," *The Art Bulletin* 83 (2001).

16 For artists see Frima Fox Hofrichter *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Doornspijk, The Netherlands: Davaco, 1989); James A. Welu and P. Biesboer, *Judith Leyster: A Dutch Master and her World* (Zwolle; New Haven: Waanders Publishers; Yale University Press, 1993); Kim Todd, *Chrysalis: Maria Sibylla Merian and the Secrets of Metamorphosis* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007); Ella Reitsma, and Sandrine A. Ulenberg, *Maria Sibylla Merian & Daughters: Women of Art and Science* (Amsterdam; Los Angeles; Zwolle: Rembrandt House Museum; J. Paul Getty Museum; Waanders, 2008); as well as Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Geertruydt Roghman and the Female Perspective in 17th-Century Dutch Genre Imagery," *Woman's Art Journal* 14 (1993): 3–10; and "Paper as Power. Carving a Niche for the Female Artist in the Work of Joanna Koerten," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 62 (2012): 238–65.

17 Two books focused on Van Schurman's intellectual networks are Pieta van Beek, *The First Female University Student: Anna Maria van Schurman (1636)* (Utrecht: Igitur, 2010) and Anne R. Larsen, *Anna Maria van Schurman, "The Star of Utrecht: The Educational Vision and Reception of a Savante* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

18 Martine Van Elk, "Courtliness, piety, and politics: emblem books by Georgette de Montenay, Anna Roemers Visscher, and Esther Inglis" in Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen, eds., *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); See also Suzanna van Dijk and Jo Nesbitt, eds., *I Have Heard about You: Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004); Annemarie Armbrust, Marguérite Corporaal, and Marjolein van Dekken, eds., *"Dat gy mij niet vergeet": correspondentie van vrouwen in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2006); Nina Geerdink, "The Appropriation of the Genre of Nuptial Poetry by Katharina Lescailje (1649–1711)" in Anke Gilleir, Alicia Montoya, and Suzanna van Dijk, eds., *Women Writing Back/Transnational Perspectives from the Late Middle Ages to the Dawn of the Modern Era* (Leiden; Boston: Brill,

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noted that cultural understandings of gender and influencing contemporaries to disproportionately blame and punish women for unchastity, adultery, and even rape.[19]

In spite of these many important studies, large clefts remain. As is also true for the South, we know little about Northern women's cultural activities and patronage, which are often attributed to husbands, fathers, and sons. Historian Susan Broomhall has made important first steps by studying the roles of Orange-Nassau women in dynastic expansion, in architectural and horticultural design, curiosity cabinets, gift-giving, letter exchange, art, and ritual, and some work has been done on Amalia van Solms as a patron, but women of the social strata below the court have been largely ignored.[20] In addition women's historians, energized by the opportunity to demonstrate women's expanded roles in a Dutch Republic renowned for its tolerant and secular outlook, have proved less interested in the study of women's religious activities there.[21] Although many recognize that there were far more women

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2010); Martine Van Elk, "True Fire, Noble Flame: Friendship Poetry by Katharina Lescailje, Cornelia van der Veer, and Katherine Philips," *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 7 (2012).

19 See for instance Els Kloek, Nicole Teeuwen, and Marijke Huisman, eds., *Women of the Golden Age: An International Debate on Women in Seventeenth-Century Holland, England and Italy* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), and *Wie hij zij, man of wijf*, cited above; Manon van der Heijden, "Women as Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Criminal Cases of Rape, Incest, and Maltreatment in Rotterdam and Delft," *Journal of Social History* 33 (2000), 623–44; Amanda Pipkin, *Rape in the Republic, 1609–1725: Formulating Dutch Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); A. Agnes Sneller, *Met man en macht: analyse en interpretatie van teksten van en over vrouwen in de vroegmoderne tijd* (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1996).

20 Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline van Gent, *Dynastic Colonialism: Gender, Materiality and the Early Modern House of Orange-Nassau*, 2016; Susan Broomhall, "Letters Make the Family: Nassau Family Correspondence at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century" in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, Campbell and Larsen, eds. (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 25–44, and "Memorializing Grief in Familial and national narratives of Dutch identity (73–98)" in *Early Modern Women in the Low Countries: Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past*, eds. Broomhall and Jennifer Spinks (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2011); Keblusek, Marika, and Jori Zijlmans, eds. *Princely Display: The Court of Frederik Hendrik of Orange and Amalia van Solms* (The Hague; Zwolle: Historical Museum; Waanders, 1997); Beranek, Saskia. "Power of the Portrait: Production, Consumption and Display of Portraits of Amalia van Solms in the Dutch Republic," PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2013.

21 For an overview of women's involvement in a variety of faiths in the Northern Netherlands see: Carlson, "In and Out of the Public Church in the Dutch Republic" in *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds eds.* Susan E. Dinan and Debra Meyers (New York: Routledge, 2001), 115–134. For Reformed women see Liesbeth Geudeke, "Positie van vrouwen in de gereformeerde kerk, 1566–1650," in *Vrome vrouwen: betekenissen van geloof voor vrouwen*

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members of the Dutch Reformed Church than men, there is no overview of its female members for the period after 1572.[22] The few scholars engaged with the history of religious Dutch women have tended to focus attention on Van Schurman and other women who joined sectarian Protestant movements that seemed to have offered women greater opportunities for leadership than the Reformed Church.[23] And although the Catholic Spiritual virgins living in the Dutch Republic have been the subject of a monograph more research on

in de geschiedenis. Mirjam Cornelis and Fred van Lieburg (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1996), 67–86; for Pietists, Elizabeth Bouldin, ""A Good Martha?" Female Leadership and Domestic Life in Radical Pietistic Communities," *Journal of Early Modern History* 22 (2018): 28–48. See also the work of religious historians Van Lieburg and W. J. op 't Hof including Van Lieburg, *Living for God*, (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006); Op 't Hof, "De Sluise Dienstmaagd Barbara Jobs in Het Licht van Haar Testamenten," *Bijdragen Tot De Geschiedenis van West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen* 30 (2002): 79–104; Op 't Hof, "Martha Greendon, de vrouw van Willem Teellinck en zijn visie op de vrouw," *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 31 (2007): 131–143.

22 See for instance, Arie Theodorus Van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 262–3, and Maarten Roy Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*. Translated by Diane Webb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 209–210.

23 For a consideration of Van Schurman's choice to reject the public Church of the Netherlands for the separatist community of Jean de Labadie see: S. van der Linde, "Anna Maria van Schurman En Haar Eucleria," *Theologia Reformata* 21 (1978): 117–44; Anne-Marie Korte, *Een gemeenschap waarin te geloven valt* (University of Nijmegen, 1985); Miriam de Baar, "'En onder 't haantje zoekt te blijven.' De betrokkenheid van vrouwen bij het huisgezin van Jean de Labadie (1669–1732)," in *Vrouwenlevens 1500–1850*, ed. Ulla Jansz, Annemarie de Wildt, De Baar, Francisca de Haan, Dineke Stam, Lilian de Bruijn, and Fia Dieteren (Nijmegen: SUN, 1987), 11–43; Van Beek, *The First Female University Student*; Van Beek and Joris Bürmann, *Ex libris: de bibliotheek van Anna Maria van Schurman en de catalogi van de Labadistenbibliotheek* (Ridderkerk: Provily Pers, 2016). For a comparison of Van Schurman with the orthodox Sara Nevius, "heretic" Grietje van Dijk, and Gent native and separatist, Antoinette de Bourignon see: De Baar, "t en is geen vrouwenwerck te spreken in de kerck. Vrouwen En Religie in de Zeventiende-Eeuwse Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden," *DinaMiek: Vrouwengeschiedenis Krant* 5 (1988); De Baar, "Van kerk naar sekte: Sara Nevius, Grietje van Dijk en Anna Maria van Schurman," *De zeventiende eeuw* 7 (1991). For other, non-Reformed, Protestant women see: Joke Spaans, "Negenenveertig Haarlemse Mirjams. Over het aandeel van vrouwen in de moeilijkheden rondom de lutherse predikant Conrad Vietor," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 67 (1987); De Baar, *"Ik moet spreken: het spiritueel leiderschap van Antoinette Bourignon (1616–1680)* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2004); H. Joldersma, H. and L. P. Grijp, *Elisabeth's Manly Courage. Testimonials and Songs of Martyred Anabaptist Women in the Low Countries* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001).

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them is needed, and the experiences of other lay Catholic women in the Dutch Republic are much less well studied.[24]

Scholarship on early modern English women provides a model for expanding in this area. For instance, since many early modern women circulated their works in manuscript rather than as printed publications, there is a dire need for research identifying and studying women's works among Low Countries examples as has been done for the English scene.[25] We also need to rethink the audience for books, especially considering the high rate of literacy among women. Is it possible to demonstrate that many books once thought to have been written for men were for women, as Margaret Ezell has shown is true for many popular English advice books?[26] Dutch literary scholars have furthermore identified a handful of political commentaries by women, but due to a traditional understanding of what constitutes political power and the fact that women's political texts often took untraditional forms, these have been undervalued these as 'merely' devotional works or poetry.[27] We therefore lack a

24 See Maurit Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden: leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996); Paul P. W. M. Dirkse, *Begijnen, pastoors en predikanten: religie en kunst in de Gouden Eeuw* (Leiden: Primavera, 2001); Carlson, "In and Out of the Public Church in the Dutch Republic, 125–128; Pollmann, "The Low Countries," 80–101 in *Palgrave Advances in the European Reformations* ed. Alec Ryrie (Basingstoke, England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

25 For the study of English women's manuscripts, scholars can access Elizabeth Clark's Perdita Project, which contains information about 230 digitized manuscripts, and two anthologies of manuscripts edited by Jill Seal Millman and Gilliam Wright and by Helen Ostovich and Elizabeth Sauer. There are also books on manuscript culture and circulation including: Victoria Burke and Jonathan Gibson, *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) and Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). For more on this see Mihoko Suzuki, *The History of British Women's Writing. Volume 3* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 13–14.

26 Ezell, "Never Boring, or Imagine My Surprise: Interregnum Women and the Culture of Reading" in *Imagining Selves: Essays in Honor of Patricia Meyer Spacks* eds. Rivka Swenson, Elise Lauterbach, and Patricia Meyer Spacks (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 155–169. For more examples of literacy studies see Suzuki, 13–14.

27 See Schenkenveld-van der Dussen's anthology. See also: Van Gemert, "Vijf Vrouwen over Oorlog En Vrede," *Historica* 21 (1998): 7–9; Nina Geerdink, "Lijkdichten bij de dood van Maria Stuart (1695) door mannen en vrouwen: rouw om een 'cieraat grooter vrouwen,'" *Historica* 32, no. 1 (2009): 3–5; Geerdink, "Cultural Marketing of William III: A Religious Turn in Katharina Lescailje's Political Poetry," *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies* 34, no. 1 (2010): 25–41.

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comprehensive investigation of Dutch women's political writings.[28] There is a wealth of as yet untapped material for further study on these topics in the archives and libraries of the Low Countries.

3 Studying Early Modern Women and Gender in the Southern Low Countries

Within the international debates on early modern women and gender the Southern Low Countries are far less well-represented than are the Northern – at least for the period beginning with the Dutch Revolt in the 1560s. This is due in part to the language issues and relative lack of interest from foreign scholars mentioned above but also to the fact that much of the Belgian research on early modern women has been published in small runs and local journals that can be difficult to access outside of the country.

In contrast to the Dutch situation, the largest subset of scholarship on Southern women deals with their religious participation. This stems largely from a long-standing tradition of Catholic institutional history (now largely continued by archivists) that counts comprehensive studies of monastic orders and individual communities, as well as local congregations, as fundamental.[29] These texts often span the entire lifespan of the order or religious house in question, and thus provide a wealth of valuable information on the lives of early modern nuns, lay sisters, Beguines, and 'spiritual daughters,' and they are excellent sources for researchers, but again have had low visibility and are largely unreferenced in the vibrant international debates around early modern Catholic women. Foreign scholars instead tend to be familiar with Craig Harline's *The Burdens*

28 Useful models are Hilda L. Smith, Mihoko Suzuki, and Susan Wiseman, *Women's Political Writings, 1610–1725* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007); Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1400–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

29 The studies are far too numerous to name here, but the most comprehensive are the *Monasticon* volumes published by the State Archives in Brussels, which are organized both geographically and by order and congregation, and Pascal Majérus, *Ces femmes qu'on dit béguines … Guide des béguinages de Belgique. Bibliographie et sources d'archives*. Introduction bibliographique à l'histoire des couvents belges antérieure à 1796, 9 (Brussels: Archives générales du royaume et archives de l'État dans les provinces, 1997); Maurits de Vroede, *Religieuses et béguines enseignantes dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux et la principauté de Liège aux XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles*. Studia paedagogica, nieuwe reeks, 20 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), and *'Kwezels' en 'zusters'. De geestelijke dochters in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1994).

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of Sister Margaret (1994) and several studies of the English 'exile' convents who settled in the Low Countries in the wake of the Reformation; just a few well-circulated articles in English have addressed other monastic and semi-monastic communities.[30] More impactful have been Paul Vandenbroeck's 1994 exhibition catalog on artworks made for monastic and semi-monastic women (*Hooglied. De beeldwereld van religieuze vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden vanaf de 13e eeuw/Le Jardin clos de l'âme: l'imaginaire des religieuses dans les Pays-Bas du Sud, depuis le 13e siècle*) and the volume published in 2001 to mark the occasion of thirteen of the Belgian Court Beguinages being named UNESCO World Heritage sites (*Vlaamse begijnhoven: werelderfgoed/Les Béguinages de Flandre: un patrimoine mondial*, edited by Suzanne van Aerschot and Michiel Heirman).

The archduchess Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, who governed the Southern Low Countries from 1598 to 1631 (jointly with her husband Albert until his death in 1621) is, like her Hapsburg women predecessors, certainly the most well-studied individual woman of her age in this region, though quite a bit of work on her remains to be done.[31] Other laywomen have received very little attention. We lack the kinds of monographs on their experiences of marriage, economic activities, and social roles that we see for the pre-Revolt period and for the Dutch Republic. This is rather curious, for the history departments of the universities of Antwerp, Leuven, and Ghent all have multiple senior early modern scholars whose work currently drives a remarkably strong tradition of local economic and social history. But while a number of these researchers

30 On the English nuns see Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *English Benedictine Nuns in Exile in the Seventeenth Century: Living Spirituality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Claire Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003); Caroline Bowden, *The Chronicles of Nazareth* (*The English Convent*), *Bruges. 1629–1793* (London: Catholic Record Society, 2017). For other communities see Cordula van Wyhe, "Piety and Politics in the Royal Convent of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Brussels 1607–1646," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 100, no. 1 (2005): 457–87, and several articles by Moran on the Beguines as well as her forthcoming *Visual Culture at the Court Beguinages of the Hapsburg Low Countries: Unconventual Women, 1585–1794* (Amsterdam University Press, expected for late 2018).

31 See Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo, eds., *Albert & Isabella, 1598–1621*, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); Cordula van Wyhe, ed., *Isabel Clara Eugenia: Female Sovereignty in the Courts of Madrid and Brussels* (Madrid; London: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispanica; Paul Holberton, 2011), and "Piety and Politics in the Royal Convent of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Brussels 1607–1646" (cited above); Birgit Houben and Dries Raeymaekers, "Women and the Politics of Access at the Court of Brussels: The Infanta Isabella's Camareras Mayores (1598–1633)," in *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting Across Early Modern Europe*, edited by Birgit Houben and Nadine Akkerman (Leiden: Brill, 2014). Among the aspects of Isabella's life that merit further study are her period as a widowed governor and her cultural patronage.

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do include women in their work when they come up, none maintains a focus on women or on gender history as a practice.[32] Instead, studies within these subfields that are relevant for us have been almost exclusively written by their graduate students and postdocs. Many of their texts are excellent, but as they have tended to be published in less prominent venues (or not at all) it is only very recently, with the increasing access offered by digitization and greater emphasis on publishing in English, that they have started to enter the broader conversations on early modern women.[33]

Women also remain underrepresented in Belgian art history, which is largely conservative in its adherence to traditional questions around artistic practice and 'genius' (inherently coded as male). The anthologies of 1998 and 1999 mentioned above represent important efforts to break this ontological glass ceiling, but have only very recently, in the context of a new wave of public interest in feminism and gender, been followed up with new work on Flemish women artists. 2016 saw twin exhibitions in Madrid and Antwerp on the Antwerp painter Clara Peeters, organized by Alejandro Vergara, Senior Curator at the Prado.[34] The impact of these shows was immediate, as demonstrated in the focus on

32 We are thinking here especially of the work produced by Bruno Blondé, Guido Marnef, Isabelle de Vos, Violet Soen, and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene and their research teams.

33 For example Lisa Van Rysselberghe, "Oude vrijsters in het 18de-eeuwse Brugse Vrije. Een levensloopbenadering van 29 nooit gehuwde vrouwen uit Brugge en het Brugse Vrije tussen 1760–1798" (MA, University of Ghent 2010); Laura van Aert, "Tussen norm en praktijk," cited above, *Winkeldochters: Vrouwen in de handel en als consument van textiel 1600–2000* (Wageningen: Stichting Textielgeschiedenis, 2007), "The legal possibilities of Antwerp widows in the late sixteenth century," *History of the Family* 12 (2007), and "Trade and Gender Emancipation: Retailing Women in Sixteenth-century Antwerp," in *Buyers & Sellers: Retail Circuits and Practices in Mediaeval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruno Blondé, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Ellen Decraene, "Grenzen voorbij: vrouwelijk lidmaatschap van religieuze broederschappen in een vroegmoderne kleine stad in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden" (PhD dissertation, University of Antwerp, 2014), and "Sisters of Early Modern Confraternities in a Small Town in the Southern Netherlands (Aalst)," *Urban History* 40, no. 02 (2013); Kim Overlaet, "To Be or Not to Be a Beguine in an Early Modern Town: Piety or Pragmatism? The Great Beguinage of St Catherine in Sixteenth-Century Mechelen," in *Single Life and the City 1200–1900*, eds. Julie De Groot, Isabelle Devos, and Ariadne Schmidt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Maja Mechant, "Dishonest and Unruly Daughters: The Combined Efforts of Families and Courts in Handling Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century Bruges," *Popolazione e Storia*, no. 1 (2013); Jonas Roelens, "Visible Women. Female Sodomy in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Southern Netherlands (1400–1550)," *Low Countries Historical Review* 130, no. 3 (2015), 3–24, Hadewich Cailliau, *Soo geluckigh als een beggijn: het begijnhof Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-ter-Hooie 1584–1792*. Verhandelingen der Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent (Ghent: Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde, 1995).

34 Alejandro Vergara, ed. *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2016).

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Peeters' works in the spring 2017 *Slow Food* exhibition at the Mauritshuis in The Hague. At the time of writing (August 2018) the second monographic exhibition on an early modern Flemish woman artist, Michaelina Wautier, is currently on show at the MAS in Antwerp. Organized by Katlijne Van der Stighelen, whose essay on the painter Anna Francisca de Bruyns appears in the present volume, the exhibition is receiving rave reviews and its catalogue (to which our authors Martha Howell and Martine van Elk also contributed) is a truly groundbreaking, interdisciplinary examination of Wautiers' life and work as well as of the conditions for early modern women's creative production more broadly.

We hope that this momentum will continue to build and that we will see more work on female artists in the South, and that these women will be integrated into the wider narratives of Flemish Art History. At the same time we would also push for an expansion of methodological approaches beyond the focus on the creative side. In terms of dealing with femininity and gender as formed, reflected, and negotiated by images, very little work has been done for the South. The most important texts remain Paul Vandenbroeck's abovementioned exhibition catalog and *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (1998) by Elizabeth Honig, which addresses the tensions around women working in the public spaces and participating in economic transactions as expressed in the popular genre of market scenes.[35] As we also see with the scholarship on the North, Southern women's patronage and consumption of art is just beginning to be addressed (for example in Moran's essay in the present volume); it is, however, clear that women were crucial actors in this sphere and that the sources for future research are plentiful.[36]

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35 See also Cordula van Wyhe, "The Fabric of Female Rule in Leone Leoni's Statue of Mary of Hungary, c. 1549–1556," in *Cambridge and the Study of Netherlandish Art*, edited by Meredith Hale (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), and "The *Idea Vitae Teresianae* (1687): The Teresian Mystic Life and its Visual Representation in the Low Countries," In *Female monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View*, edited by Cordula van Wyhe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Margit Thøfner, "Marrying the City, Mothering the Country: Gender and Visual Conventions in Johannes Bochius's Account of the Joyous Entry of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella into Antwerp," *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (1999): 3–27.

36 Moran, "Of Locked Doors and Open Windows: Architectural Strategies at the Court Beguinages in the Seventeenth Century," *Chicago Art Journal* 20 (2010); "*A cui ne fece dono*: Art, Exchange, and Affective Prayer in Anthony van Dyck's Lamentation for Antwerp Beguines," in *Sensing the Divine: Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Christine Göttler and Wietse de Boer (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Xander van Eck, "Between Restraint and Excess: The Decoration of the Church of the Great Beguinage at Mechelen in the Seventeenth Century," *Simiolus*, 28, no. 3 (2000), 129–162. There are, certainly, excellent studies of patronage that *include* women – and offer a glimpse into just how

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4 Our Contributions

The present volume begins to close some of these gaps and to showcase the enormous potential for new research on early modern Low Countries women. Across our essays a number of themes emerge, both as key elements of our authors' arguments and as the historical and/or theoretical background for their approaches. Here we trace what we see as the most prominent of these themes: women's actions and experiences within religious struggles; their actions as cultural creators; representations of women and femininity as shaped by and shaping historical mindsets; and the question of action and agency, or of the degree of choice early modern Low Countries women had within patriarchal structures as well as how their actions impacted those structures to effect change.

The Reformation and Counter Reformation fundamentally structured life and identities in the Low Countries in our period, and this religious strife forms the backdrop for all of our studies but is more directly addressed by some authors than by others. Two emphasize women's active roles in spreading post-Tridentine Catholicism: Margit Thøfner's essay reveals Southern Low Countries nuns' portraits as as tools that their communities could use to demonstrate their fervor, convince unbelievers of the value of their calling, and strengthen their positions when faced with Protestant attacks; in contrast to Thøfner's expansive view, Sarah Joan Moran's text zooms in on the sisters Maria, Anna, and Christina Houtappel, and their cousin Anna Sgrevens, who strategically dedicated their fortunes to advancing the Counter Reformation by partnering with the Antwerp Jesuits in the building and decoration of the city's most opulent baroque memorial chapel. On the Protestant side, Amanda Pipkin highlights Cornelia Teellinck's production of Reformed devotional texts that taught proper doctrine and prophesied God's destruction of the Spanish forces as a result of her first-hand experiences of persecution and warfare in the early years of the Revolt.

The juxtaposition of these essays detailing Reformed and Catholic women's religious evangelism reveals the passion both sides brought to fight for their beliefs, particularly during the period of intense religious warfare in Europe prior to 1648. Taken together these essays also offer a window onto the

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active female patrons were – but do not explore the gendered circumstances of their actions. See for example Christine Göttler, "Securing Space in a Foreign Place: Peter Paul Rubens's "Saint Teresa" for the Portuguese Merchant-Bankers in Antwerp" *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (1999); Bert Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen: Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld*, Studies stadsgeschiedenis (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2008).

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experiences of both Catholic and Protestant women – and men – forced to flee during the Revolt religious persecution and settle abroad (the Houtappels fled to Italy and Germany while the Teellinck family members moved to the Northern provinces and to England). They further allow us to see the spread of religious ideas across national boundaries as Teellinck modeled her work on the French confession of faith adopted by the Dutch Reformed Church in Emden, Germany, and as the Jesuits in the Southern Low Countries negotiated with Roman authorities over notions of decorum and luxury in the decoration of devotional spaces. By closely analyzing women's writing and art and architectural patronage, these three studies highlight the vital roles that less well-known Protestant and Catholic women played in confessionalist polemics and reveal the extent to which many inhabitants of the Low Countries valued women as allies in the struggle to spread religious beliefs and vilify those who dissented.

Many of our authors address the theme of women as cultural creators and interrogate how their gendered social positions, as well as their political contexts, shaped their output. Pipkin is certainly among them, as she demonstrates how the Teellinck women authored new religious literature in the service of Reformed evangelism, and we might think of the female patrons discussed by Thøfner and Moran as creators as well. For Martine van Elk in "Publicizing Female Virtue on the Dutch Stage: Verwers, Questiers, and Lescailje," it is not just two female playwrights' participation in and contributions to the male world of the stage that are of interest, but also how each deals with gendered tropes within her text and how these relate to the broader transition from a traditional to a modern understanding of public and private in the Dutch Republic. Katlijne van der Stighelen's essay on the Brussels painter Anna Francisca de Bruyns restores this forgotten artist to her rightful place in the history of art, locating her in the complex family/professional networks that defined the Flemish painting scene in the seventeenth century and underlining her commissions for the archducal court.

The representation of women and gender, in text and in image, is also a major theme across our contributions. For Van Elk, Thøfner, and Moran, female authors' and patrons' impulse to defend themselves against negative stereotypes of women resulted in plays and artworks that argued implicitly for the virtue of the female sex. Martha Moffitt Peacock makes positive representations of women and femaleness, and specifically their *impact* on women viewers, the topic of her essay on the 'Maid of Holland' figure in the Dutch Republic. Peacock draws on a wide range of material culture, including stained glass, coins, and firebacks, in addition to prints and paintings, to argue that the allegorical 'Maid' was an inspiration for Dutch women and helps to explain

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why the seventeenth-century United Provinces produced so many famous female writers, artists, and scientists. Diane Wolfthal, by contrast, deals with artistic depictions of servants. Wolfthal traces shifting patterns in these portrayals in the Low Countries and questions how gender and servitude intersect through them, offering a broad and nuanced overview of these depictions. Like Peacock, Wolfthal takes historiographical issues head-on, pointing out that while the cumulative effects of classism and ageism over time have effectively rendered painted servants invisible to modern-day researchers, in the early modern period their status both in society and in visual culture was complex and deserves our attention.

Finally, a major theme touched upon by our authors is the issue of early modern women's ability to make choices, pursue their own goals, and take actions within and against the constricts of patriarchal culture. Some, like Reformed evangelist Cornelia Teellinck, painter Anna Francisca de Bruyns, and playwrights Catharina Questiers and Catharina Verwers, stepped into the normally masculine-coded, public spheres of religious evangelism and the creative professions. Others, like the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens, rejected marriage to use their fortunes to construct highly visible monuments to themselves while promoting Catholic doctrine. Peacock argues that positive and androgenized female imagery inspired early modern Dutch women to cross the boundaries between domestic and public to take on new roles, while for Wolfthal, visual imagery of lower-class and older women often reinscribed their marginalization both in historical and historiographical terms. In all of these contributions our authors are dealing, either explicitly or implicitly, with the notion of historical women's agency as it has been popularized in various subfields over the last few decades. And in "The Problem of Women's Agency in late Medieval and Early Modern Europe" Martha Howell asks what exactly we mean by this term, how we use it, and to what effect. Her theoretical inquiry challenges us to differentiate between types of women's historical actions and grapple with the fact that female 'agency', despite notionally operating against or outside of patriarchal structures, is in fact produced by shifting contexts within those structures. In so doing, Howell raises valuable questions for the early modern Low Countries women under investigation in this volume. Do women disrupt the patriarchy by fulfilling important roles within religious communities whose doctrines require the subordination of women to men, or are they simply finding the spaces in which patriarchy gives them more room to operate? Can female playwrights effectively challenge male domination when they publicly display examples of women exercising political power? Does a painter like Anna de Bruyns belie cracks in the foundations of male privilege in artistic

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production, or is she an exception that confirms the rule? And to what extent is the asking of these questions appropriate to the historical subjects under consideration? Howell pushes future researchers, both of the Low Countries and beyond, to consider more carefully how we parse notions of agency for early modern women and, in particular, their capacity to effect lasting social change.

The essays in this volume thus detail various aspects of early modern Low Countries women's lives and their roles in shaping the course of history. As was argued by second-wave feminist scholars in the 1970s, the study of women's history is inherently interdisciplinary, and our essays indeed take various approaches to access their subjects. Together they demonstrate the enormous potential of the Low Countries for the study of early modern women. By highlighting the histories of women and gender in the region we hope to inspire more scholars, and especially those senior scholars whose work most influences the distribution of research funding in Belgium and the Netherlands, to take up these topics and show that such work is crucial for gaining a fuller and more accurate picture of early modern Flemish and Dutch culture. We also hope that our work encourages researchers engaged with a range of historical topics to consider the perspectives, experiences, and impacts of female actors, viewers, readers, and makers, bringing us closer to a time when women and gender are no longer routinely overlooked but rather considered as vital elements in our understanding of the past.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem of Women's Agency in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Martha Howell

In the last few decades, historians have regularly used the term "agency" to frame their studies of historical actors, probably none more so than historians of late medieval and early modern women. Witness, to cite just a few recent examples, all treating European women from roughly 1300 to 1800: *Gender and Change; Agency, Chronology and Periodisation* (2009); *Women, Agency, and the Law, 1300–1700* (2013); *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640–1830* (2013); *Women and Portraits in Early Modern Europe: Gender Agency, and Identity* (2008); *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies*, (2007). Even when not specifically included in the titles of books or articles, the word "agency" is laced throughout innumerable scholarly investigations published in the last several years.[1] Although such studies describe women in different settings and with dissimilar capacities, the women in such studies are credited with agency because in some way they seem to have skirted or even reshaped the patriarchal structure of their day. In that respect, these studies imply, they are to be distinguished from the women who acted in full accord with patriarchal norms, even if they may have done so reluctantly.

This research has measurably enriched and complicated the historical record. Most of the women's historians publishing during the last half century or so necessarily concentrated on correcting an historical record that had all but ignored women, thus seeking to expose what were usually described as "women's roles" in society.[2] Although some of the studies inevitably featured

1 For one of many examples, see Patricia Crawford, "Women's Dreams in early modern England," *History Workshop Journal* 49 (Spring, 2000): 129–41, where she remarks that "The dreams I have selected for discussion reveal women as historical agents, actively shaping the meanings in their lives, and offering these interpretations to others.": 130.

2 For representative examples see articles such as James B. Collins, "The Economic Role of Women in Seventeenth-Century France," *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Autumn, 1989): 436–470; Suzanne Desan, "The Role of Women in Religious Riots During the French Revolution," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, Special Issue: *The French Revolution in Culture* (Spring, 1989): 451–468; or Wes Harrison, "The Role of Women in Anabaptist Thought

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women who challenged male authority in some way, these scholars were principally concerned to demonstrate women's importance to the societies in which they lived, not to unearth evidence of challenges to male dominance. This did not mean, however, that the women were powerless. We might even argue that they too had agency, if we take the OED's definition of agency as the "ability or capacity to act or exert power," for these women certainly found ways to protect and advance their own interests.

However, scholars explicitly examining women's agency intend to do more than document women's "roles" in society. And, as they urge, we do need to identify those moments when the expectations surrounding gender roles and gender identities were challenged or changed, and we need to clarify the part women themselves played in producing these disruptions. We also need to be attentive, as the recent work on women's agency tends to be, to the way that social rank, marital status, chronological and geographical location affected women's agency. I want, however, to plead for more rigorous attention to just what powers we are claiming for women when we assign them "agency." I also want to consider how any woman acquired what we are calling agency if we take seriously Marx's point that all historical actors, female or male, may "make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past."[3] In what sense then can a woman sufficiently free herself of the patriarchal regime that is "given and transmitted from the past" in order to claim agency?

Scholars describing women's agency in early modern Europe have, in fact, often conceded, as the editors of *Women, Agency, and the Law* put it, that women agents typically acted "within the hegemonic paradigm of patriarchal authority."[4] In some studies, women's capacity for agency is in fact produced by a feature of the patriarchal structure itself. The volume *Married Women and the Law in premodern northwest Europe*, for example, explores the way some marital property regimes in northwest Europe could allow married women property and legal rights not anticipated by the principle of coverture fundamental to both English Common Law and continental customary law. Customary laws, for example, often allowed women full ownership of personal goods, what many customs referred to as "goods of her body," thus making valuable assets such as

and Practice: The Hutterite Experience of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring, 1992): 49–69.

3 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852).

4 Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson, eds., *Women, Agency and the Law* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013): 1.

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clothing and jewels their private property; others did not allow a husband full control over the property his wife brought to the marriage but only guardianship of it; in England women were not uniformly subject to the marital property regime of Common Law but often, alternatively, to the custom of cities or of the manor.[5] In other studies women's agency arises as they exercise expected roles. Take, for example, the interesting article, "'With a Sword drawne in her Hande,'" in another collection. Framed by a discussion of how the boundaries of the household were understood, negotiated, and contested in seventeenth-century rural Wales, the article reveals that women aggressively, sometimes using violence, ranged far beyond the domestic space in order to protect their claims to the household and the social rights that accompanied possession of that space. They did so, however, not as transgressors of the reigning gender order, but as legitimate protectors of theirs and their families' status.[6]

In other studies, women agents were expanding traditional roles. For example, we learn that women in early modern Lyon were ubiquitous in the food trades despite guild restrictions that imposed formal restrictions on their participation. The evidence presented suggests that these women entered the market (illegally for the most part) not in search of the power and autonomy that we associate with entrepreneurial status in market economies, but simply as a result of their need for income or their obligation to help out in a family shop.[7] A study on Copenhagen's licensed working women in the same volume suggests a similar causality: women often acquired legitimate positions in the market as representatives of a husband who was incapacitated or as widowed heads of household.[8] Looked at in this way, these women were rendered "agents" (i.e., violators of patriarchal norms that would exclude them from certain market sectors) by way of their position in families, by raw economic needs, or by a combination of both. This of course does not diminish the fact that they were "out of place" in a sense – in places women were not supposed to be – and that they were there because they had found ways into markets

5 Cordelia Beattie and Matthew Frank Stevens, eds., *Married Women and the Law in premodern northwest Europe* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2013).

6 Niola Whyte, "'With a Sword Drawne in her Hande': Defending the Boundaries of Household Space in Seventeenth-Century Wales," in Kane and Williamson, eds., *Women, Agency and the Law*: 141–57.

7 Anne Montenach, "Legal Trade and Black Markets: Food Trades in Lyon in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century," in Deborah Simonton and Anne Montenach, eds., *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640–1830* (New York: Routledge, 2013): 17–35.

8 Carol Gold, "On the Streets and in the Markets: Independent Copenhagen Saleswomen," in Simonton and Montenach, eds., *Female Agency in the Urban Economy*: 35–56.

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supposedly closed to them. In that sense they were indeed agents, but that did not imply an escape from the hierarchal gender system of the day.

Thus, for the most part we read not of women who overturned the patriarchal regime but of those who "negotiated the system" to protect their interests, who "worked around" the constraints of law to achieve a goal not intended by the law, or who "strategically positioned themselves" in ways that benefitted them, all suggesting that agency was achieved by circumventing rather than confronting or altering conventional norms.[9] Similarly, we have studies that identify the "avenues of female influence in legal cultures," once again implying that agency meant finding routes around patriarchal restrictions.[10] Although such phrasing does suggest that agency somehow involves weakening or undermining male control, scholars have rarely made overt challenge to masculine authority a measure of agency; in short, the women described in most studies were not "resistant" in that they did not self-consciously or intentionally seek to disrupt the system of male dominance. Some scholars have made that point explicitly. In their Introduction to *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640–1830*, for example, Deborah Simonton and Anne Montenach explain that:

> … agency here is not conceptualized strictly in terms of resistance to male authority or patriarchal patterns, but arose from the variety of everyday interactions in which women accommodated, negotiated or manipulated social rules and gender roles.[11]

Here a woman's experiences *qua woman* (as defined by the prevailing sociocultural system) gives her the means to acquire "authority and liberty"; although "agency" sometimes even produces "changes within gender relations," such change is not its measure. The "Introduction" to Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson's *Women, Agency and the Law*, gives the same credit to "experience" as the source of agency, again however with no insistence that agency

9 One of three sections in a recent volume of essays [Karen Nelson, ed., *Attending to Early Modern Women: Conflict and Concord* (Newark, Del: University of Delaware Press, 2013)], is, for example, labeled "Negotiations."

10 Kane and Williamson, eds., *Women, Agency and the Law*: 1. We are sometimes told, in another formulation, about women who "chose" a certain action, thus implying that conscious "choice" is a sign of "agency." Further, Simonton and Montenach, eds., *Female Agency in the Urban Economy* describe many of the contributions to their volume as studies of "situations in which women could rise above their restrictive situations" and …. could "access authority and liberty.": 4.

11 Simonton and Montenach, eds., "Introduction," *Female Agency in the Urban* Economy: 5.

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necessarily implies fundamental revision of the gender system or the broader society more generally.[12] Instead, it arises from women's everyday experiences within the patriarchal regime.

Yet, the terms of gender subordination have changed throughout history and did so as well during the late medieval and early modern period in Europe. Some scholars have explicitly addressed this issue by pointing out that any patriarchal regime is imbedded in – and ineluctably bound to – the larger political, social, economic, or cultural order; it necessarily varies as that order varies. An article in *Married Women and the Law*, "Peasant Women, Agency, and Status," for example, examined the marked differences in peasant women's property rights and their legal status from region to region in medieval England, showing that some women possessed tenures and had access to courts in their own name, while others had no such status. The author of the study argued that these differences reflected variations in manorial custom, landholding patterns, and economic structure. Thus the question of women's status, she concluded, is not answerable by way of a study of the patriarchal structure alone but:

> … needs [in this instance] to be explored within the context of the feudal mode of production …. we need to try to understand gendered relationships within their specific local and manorial contexts … the structures underpinning oppression and inequalities change, and it is these structures that need to be understood.[13]

Another article implicitly positioned the agency of a young Dutch woman in the religious culture of Dutch Calvinism. By independently seeking to persuade her errant brother to leave the Jesuits and return to the Dutch Reformed Church, she appropriated for herself the paternal role. Her bold actions may well have been owed in part to her personality but arguably she was empowered to take on the usual male role both by the Protestant grant of spiritual authority to the "priesthood of all believers" and the Calvinist insistence that

12 Kane and Williamson, eds., *Women, Agency and the Law, 1300–1700* (2013): 2; later in the Introduction, the authors also explain that their study combines investigations of "the intersections of agency, voices, discourse and lived experience," but the emphasis is decidedly on what women did and the situations in which they did it: 5.

13 Miriam Müller, "Peasant Women, Agency and Status in mid-thirteenth to late fourteenth-century England: some Reconsiderations," in Beattie and Stevens, eds., *Married Women and the Law*: 91–113.

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the family was the keeper of the covenant.[14] In this case, it was the specific culture of her day that allowed female agency. Even such studies, however, do not suggest that women exited or abolished the patriarchal regime – only that it changed, precisely because it was foundational to the entire social order. As one part moved, so did others.

If female agency can be produced by the patriarchal structure itself and by the way that patriarchy is imbedded in the larger complex of social structures, then agency cannot be understood apart from these structures themselves. We are thus returned to an old debate about the relationship between structure and agency, one that has long occupied scholars equipped with powerful social theory drawn, for example, from Marx, Levi-Strauss, or Braudel, In form these models can be perilously determinist, so firm are the structures they posit. Whether rooted in functionalist views of how the economy works, how social order is achieved, or how environment, institutional histories, and mentalité combine, they threaten to so imprison individuals in the logics of the structure that there is nothing to explain except how the structure worked. That problem inevitably made historians cautious about such theorizing. Thus, although many of us have adapted these models in our own studies we have had to work very hard to insert real people's lives into the story as anything more than embodiments of structural imperatives.

The so-called linguistic or cultural turn of the 1970s and 80s, although a response to the limitations of such structuralist theory, and for that reason loosely characterized as post-structuralist, nevertheless seemed to confront historians with a similar problem. In the form provided by certain (limited) readings of Foucault among others, cultural discourse, understood not just as language and ideology but also as institutions of all kinds, including law and informal relations of power more generally, envelops the individual, creating him or her as "agent" only of the discourse itself. There can be, in this understanding, no "agency" in a robust sense of the term. Thus, just as powerfully as the structuralist theories of Marxists or of some sociologists, economists, and anthropologists, discourse in this sense seemed to precede the construction of the subject, making him or her nothing but a "subject position." Understandably, historians rarely took up the full implications of this kind of cultural theory, just as they had mostly avoided the full implications of structuralist social theory. In part, they rejected it because their archives were full of individuals so different from one another that none seemed to perfectly enact the logic of the discourse.

14 Craig Harline, "Big Sister as Intermediary: how Maria Rolandus tried to win back her wayward brother," in Nelson, ed., *Attending to Early Modern Women, Conflict and Concord*: 3–23.

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Even more worrying for historians was the difficulty of accounting for change; if the individual – even the self-conscious, intentional individual – was only a product of the discourse, he or she would have no capacity to disrupt the system itself, only to perform a role in it. As a result of these problems a great many historians, probably the vast majority, simply ignored cultural and linguistic theory, dismissing it for what Dror Wahrman once referred to as its "uncompromising constructivism."[15]

The interest in agency visible in so many studies of women today has its roots in the "turn" away from this cultural turn and the new emphasis on experience proposed by what Gabrielle Spiegel, among others, has characterized as "practice studies." There have been countless ruminations on "history since the cultural turn" and many excursuses on the theory that helped get us to this place, so here I will use only a few passages from Spiegel's essay to help illuminate the winding path that introduced practice studies and made "agency" so urgent a topic of research for historians, perhaps especially historians of women and gender.[16] Quoting E. P. Thompson in the *Poverty of Theory* of 1978 (whose 1968 *The Making of the English Working Class* mounted the most influential early attack on standard Marxist historiography and opened the way to a rich cultural history of agency), Spiegel observed that practice studies allow us to see that "structure is transformed into process and the subject re-enters history not merely as an expression of larger forces but as a conscious agent who interprets his or her life in terms of cultural norms, tradition, moral and familial values and feelings, and religious beliefs."[17] In Spiegel's view, if historians follow Thompson's advice and begin with what people actually do, "practice and meaning will be uncoupled from the impersonal workings of discursive regimes and rejoined to the /active/ intentions of human agents imbedded in social worlds."[18] This uncoupling allows, she concludes, "a recuperation of the historical actor as an intentional (if not wholly self-conscious) agent."[19] The result is an "emphasis on historically generated and always contingent nature

15 Dror Wahrman, "Change and the Corporeal in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Gender History: Or can Cultural History be rigorous?", in Alexandra Shepard and Garthine Walker, eds., *Gender and Change: Agency, Chronology and Periodisation* (2009): 166–191,188.

16 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, ed., *Practicing History; New Directions in Historical writing after the Linguistic Turn* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005) provides an excellent guide and includes some of the most significant articles published on the issue. Also see, for further discussion, the AHR Forum "Historiographic 'Turns' in Critical Perspective," *American Historical Review* 117 no. 3 (June, 2012): 698–813.

17 E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory* (London: Merlin Press, 1978), 362; in Spiegel, *Practicing History*, 7.

18 Spiegel, *Practicing History*, 3.

19 Spiegel, *Practicing* History, 4.

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of structures of culture .... that returns us to age-old concerns with processes, agents, change and transformation."[20]

I want to make a couple of points about this call for practice studies and the agents it calls into being. First, as Spiegel herself points out, this "turn" away from the cultural turn is in some sense a return to the usual work of historians, although in her view (and mine) it does not imply rejection of lessons to be learned from linguistic and cultural theory. Second, it seems that "agency," as understood in this conception of practice studies, can be both conscious and unconscious. Agents can of course understand themselves as strategists, schemers, accommodators, or even resisters but they do not have to be so explicitly intentional. What matters is that they disturb, perhaps even permanently alter, the cultural, social, economic, or political system that constrains them. The question for historians, then, is not just what change they effect or even how they do it. Equally important is the question of how they are enabled or compelled to do so if we accept the central premise of discourse theory – that we can operate in society only in terms set by the discursive structures that organize it.

To put this question to rest, we have to find a way around – or through – the paradox Judith Butler named: "the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms."[21] To do so, we have to treat structure and agency as mutually constitutive, not as opposites. It that, as Spiegel put it in her presidential address to the American Historical Association in 2009, historians need to take practice as the "starting point of social analysis, since practice emerges here as the space in which a meaningful interaction between discursive constitution and individual initiative occurs."[22] It is those interactions that produce the possibility of agency; they arise from the contradictions inherent in the structures that position people as historical actors. Foucault made precisely this point (although he is sometimes not understood to have done so). Discursive structures are, he insisted, entirely constructed; far from being natural arrangements of meanings, forces, and people into a powerful edifice that combines ideology, law, economy, and social organization, they are cobbled together over time by contests among people for power, stability, and significance. They are necessarily riven by fault lines, some easy to see, others less so. Thus, as Joan Scott recommended in her "Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis" of 1986, "we need to replace the notion that social power

20 Spiegel, *Practicing History*, 25.

21 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993): 15.

22 Spiegel, "The Task of the Historian," *American Historical Review* 114 no. 1 (February 2009): 10.

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is unified, coherent, and centralized with something like Foucault's concept of power as dispersed constellations of unequal relationships, discursively constituted in social 'fields of force.' Within these processes and structures, there is room for a concept of human agency as the attempt (at least partially rational) to construct an identity, a life, a set of relationships, a society with certain limits and with language – conceptual language that at once sets boundaries and contains the possibility for negation, resistance, reinterpretation, the play of metaphoric invention and imagination."[23]

In the particular case of late medieval and early modern Europe, women often found the "room" to which Scott referred as a result of contradictions within specific features of the period's patriarchal discourse. To return to some of the examples mentioned earlier in this essay, a woman in a city like Lyon or Copenhagen might be expected to contribute to the financial support of the household, even to sustain it on her own, and thus had to find ways into the market economy, even if that meant ignoring masculine rights to those places. Similarly, a peasant woman might be positioned as carrier of property from one male line to another, someone with no independent rights to the property, but simultaneously be granted rights before law as the property's possessor. A Protestant daughter could protect, possibly even preach, the faith because Christianity promised women equal access to the divine word even if in that capacity she violated norms about daughterly submission and male leadership of the faith. In each of these cases, it was the women's experience as subjects of a patriarchal regime that, paradoxically, enabled their agency because the patriarchal norm was riven by contradiction. Understood in this way, however, "agency" can seem anything but autonomous; in this conception, "agency" is only action – action born not of individual will but of the experience of living in an inherently unstable patriarchal structure.

We are thus returned to another of Joan Scott's influential articles, "The Evidence of Experience": is there any experience outside the discourse that enables it?[24] If not, can any individual disrupt the system, i.e., really be an agent of change? My answer to both is "yes," and "yes" to the second because experience sometimes disturbs the discursive structure enough to allow escape from it, whether ideologically or in practice. Women in late medieval and early modern Europe (as elsewhere) experienced such contradictions almost

23 Joan Scott, "Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 no. 5 (1986): 1053–75,1067; her quote from Foucault is from *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1980) and *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–77* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

24 Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17–4 (Summer 1991): 773–797; reprinted many times, including in Spiegel, *Practicing History*.

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daily. Scholars could add many examples to those already discussed here. We have long known the story of Margery of Kempe, for example, who insisted on a sexless marriage, thus violating her Christian obligation to pay the conjugal debt even while she simultaneously observed Christian teachings about the sins of the flesh; we have regularly come across proscriptive literature like the *Ménagier de Paris*, which warned the young wife addressed by the text about the marketplace's threat to female honor even while it carefully instructed her on how to shop; we have many detailed studies that display women who appropriated misogynist narratives defining them as irreducibly "fleshly" to claim spiritual authority.[25] We also have studies that locate women's agency in larger historical shifts. Some scholars have, for example, argued that in the early modern Netherlands where the market economy was booming single women were able to find paid work outside the family workshop, thus allowing them to make their own marriages – or not to marry at all – giving unexpected (and probably unwelcome) force to the canonical rule that "consent" made marriage.[26] Other scholars have shown how in the age of the printing press and increased vernacular literacy, women published new kinds of stories about women and men, family, and social order more generally, ones that imagined a different kind of gender binary and different experiences of love.[27]

As we document such varied instances of female agency, however, we also need to be alert to signs that even the most aggressive challenges to patriarchal norms do not necessarily weaken, much less bring an end to, gender hierarchy. As Amy Hollywood noted in a recent article responding to literature on medieval women's ability to redefine spiritual experience by appropriating misogynist narratives about the female body, "medieval women make use of the very gender subordination that constrains them as the condition for and source of agency …[but this is] an agency ultimately ascribed not to religious women themselves, but to God."[28] Making a somewhat similar point, I have elsewhere argued that the expansion of the late medieval market steadily drew women out of subsistence production for the household, making many them

25 Caroline Bynum's *Jesus as Mother: Studies of the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982) and her *Holy Feast Holy Fast* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1987) examine women's access to spiritual authority.

26 Tine de Moor and Jan Luiten van Zanden, *Vrouwen en de geboorte van het kapitalisme in West-Europa* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2006); also idem, "Girlpower: the European Marriage Pattern (WMP) and labour markets in the north sea region in the late medieval and early modern period," *Economic History Review*, 63 no. 1: 1–33.

27 See, for example, Paul Salzman, *Early Modern Women's Writing: an Anthology, 1560–1700* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford U.P, 2000).

28 Amy Hollywood, "Gender, Agency and the Divine in Religious Historiography," *The Journal of Religion* 84 no. 4 (October, 2004): 514–528, 514.

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active workers in the wage economy, transforming some into independent businesswomen, and in general freeing such women from many of the constraints associated with membership in (and subordination within) a male-headed household economy.[29] In origin, however, women's moves into market production were simply in the service of a patriarchal structure that assigned them co-responsibility for household subsistence. As a result of their place in the newly powerful market, however, women entered a public (economic) sphere that was becoming, as Craig Muldrew has pointed out, the site "where social status was communicated."[30] The threat to male privilege was obvious, and subtle backlashes followed. Guilds steadily closed ranks and those that continued to admit women or those that were established to organize female labor during the early modern period were either politically powerless or internally structured to deny women governing authority. In this instance, women's agency was a double-edged sword, both the mark of their presence and influence in an increasingly powerful market economy and the impetus for reforms of the labor market – reforms that confined women workers to undeniably capacious but nevertheless marginalized spaces in the market.

As we look for instances of female agency in late medieval and early modern Europe, we thus need to be attentive to all the complexities that surround this concept. Typically born in the contradictions that are inherent in discursive structures, female agency is more a sign of discursive instability than a signal that the gender system is being fundamentally undermined. Real change, in the sense of a lessening of gender hierarchy, can occur, however, when these disturbances arise from, or even precipitate shifts in, the larger social, political, economic, or cultural order. In such moments, the gender system is necessarily restructured, sometimes in ways that provide women more space and redefine gender codes. Sometimes such shifts even produce ideological upheavals, giving rise to the kind of political self-consciousness that characterizes feminist movements. But such progressive outcomes are not givens. The only certainty is that patriarchy is an unstable construct rooted in the larger social system it both enables and on which it depends. As these structures shift, collide, and morph, agency is produced.

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29 Martha Howell, "The Gender of Europe's Commercial Economy, 1200–1700," *Gender and History* 20 no. 3 (November, 2008): 519–38.

30 Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998): 148 and passim.

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CHAPTER 2

Women's Writing during the Dutch Revolt: the Religious Authority and Political Agenda of Cornelia and Susanna Teellinck, 1554–1625

Amanda Pipkin

It was once widely accepted that early modern women chose to write on religious subjects because this was a less audacious, more modest type of authorship than original works on secular subjects.[1] Over the last twenty-five years, however, scholars of English religious history have repudiated this notion, following Phyllis Mack's lead in highlighting the political dimensions of women's religious writings.[2] Historian Patricia Crawford explained that religion was women's most powerful justification for activity outside their conventional roles."[3] However, this shift in perspective has not yet been adopted by Dutch scholars who have argued that Netherlandish women were not able to engage in impassioned or controversial political debate before the eighteenth century.[4] This article will reveal that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlandish women did indeed employ Reformed Protestantism not only to justify their desire to write and publish, but also to supply the religious language they used to articulate political concerns without running afoul of the Reformed Church.

As early as 1572, two years prior to the seven northern provinces' adoption of the Reformed Church as the official religion, two sisters living in the province of Zeeland justified the writing, the circulation, and eventually the publication of their written work through their adherence to orthodox Calvinism. This study of Cornelia Teellinck (1554–1576) and Susanna Teellinck (1551–1625)

1 Mihoko Suzuki noted this in her introduction to Suzuki, ed., *The History of British Women's Writing. Volume 3* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 15.

2 Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

3 Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England: 1500–1720* (London: Routledge, 2005), 210.

4 Annelies de Jeu, *'t spoor der dichteressen: netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000), 197. M. A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "Women's Writing from the Low Countries 1575–1875" in *Women's writing from the Low Countries 1200–1875: a bilingual anthology*, eds., Lia van Gemert, Myra J. Heerspink Scholz, and Paul Vincent (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 49.

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demonstrates that women could voice their political opinions, speak out in favor of the revolt against Spain, and expose the shortcomings of leaders on both sides. It also reveals that Cornelia, Susanna, and several of their female relatives filled important roles in the new Reformed communities of Zierikzee and Middelburg between 1572 and 1625. As members of the powerful Teellinck family, which supplied local, regional, and national bureaucrats and whose members inspired a Dutch revival movement called the Further Reformation, the Teellinck sisters greatly impacted the Dutch Republic through their actions and their literary legacy.

1 Conversion, Persecution, and War

The Teellinck sisters were well-known converts to Calvinism at the pivotal moment when its doctrines were spreading rapidly across the Spanish-controlled Low Countries, igniting the struggle that would ultimately lead to Dutch independence. Although their parents, Eewoud Teellinck (d. 1561) and Helena Willem Jansdr. (1537–1565), were Catholic and we do not know exactly when the sisters converted, it is possible that they heard Calvinist sermons in Zeeland as early as 1566.[5] The new faith had gained a strong foothold in and around Cornelia and Susanna's hometown of Zierikzee by November 1568 when Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alba, sentenced seventeen men in the vicinity to banishment and the confiscation of their goods for preaching Calvinism, serving as deacons and church council members, confessing the Calvinist faith, and opening their homes for services. While Alba served King Philip II of Spain as governor of the Netherlands from 1567 to 1573, he instituted a Council of Troubles to punish Netherlanders who had committed treason and/or heresy. While it is estimated that 9,000 Netherlanders fled to England and Germany, Alba executed roughly 1000 persons.[6] The migration of Calvinists abroad created substantial numbers of churches in exile

5 W. J. op 't Hof noted that Eewoud's possessions included Catholic items including images of the saints and a crucifix. Op 't Hof, *Willem Teellinck (1579–1629). Leven, geschriften en invloed* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 2008), 26. For more on the Teellincks, see: P. J. Meertens, *Letterkundig leven in Zeeland in de 16e en de eerste helft der 17e eeuw* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1943), 171–178.

6 "Sententie van Bannissement ende Confiscatie van goederen, jegens seuenthien persoenen, voirvluchtich vuyter Steede van Zierickxee ende Poortvliet. 8 November 1568 … Rochus Adriaense mede looper en armbesorger, en heeft bekentenis van de Calvinistische Leere gedaen." Jacob Marcus, *Sententien en indagingen van den hertog van Alba* (Amsterdam: Hendrik Vieroot, 1735), 177–178. Meertens, 159.

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whose members later returned radicalized from their experiences, including Susanna's future husband Rochus Adriaanse Hoffer who returned to Zierikzee from exile in England in 1572.[7]

While it is very likely that most of the Teellinck family converted to Calvinism just before or while Alba governed the Netherlands, Cornelia was the first member of her family to provide a record of her Protestant piety. She authored a statement of her Calvinist beliefs and in 1573, at the age of nineteen, submitted it "to the Church Council then governing this community [Zierikzee]".[8] Along with providing evidence of moral purity and yielding to ecclesiastic discipline, submitting oneself to doctrinal examination was a requirement for church membership and permission to partake in the Lord's Supper, a important symbolic and spiritual rite among the Calvinists.[9] It is possible that Cornelia submitted her confession following the successful rebel capture of Den Briel in 1572, in which case its circulation among the congregation may also have served to celebrate the new capacity of the Zeeland Reformed churches to publicly organize.[10]

Although submitted to the Zierikzee church council for approval, the orthodoxy of Teellinck's confession was essentially guaranteed because she modeled it after that of Guido de Brès, which had been first published in French in 1561, translated into Dutch in 1562, and then adopted by the first general synod of the Dutch Reformed Church held in exile at Emden, Germany in October 1571.[11] Teellinck may have had access to some version of this so-called Belgic

7 Andrew Pettegree, "Religion and the Revolt," in *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt*, ed. Graham Darby (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 76–77.

8 "… aen den Kercken Raedt deser Ghemeynte, doen ter tijdt regerende …" Susanna's preface to Cornelia Ewouts Teellinck, *Een Corte Belijdenisse Des Geloofs: Voormaels Schriftelijck Overghegeven Den Kercken-Raedt Binnen Ziericzee* (Amsterdam: Broer Jansz., [fifth edition] 1625), 4. 1573 is an approximate date here. Susanna wrote that Cornelia "boven de neghenthien Iaren ten hooghsten niet oudt en was …".

9 Benjamin J. Kaplan, "Dutch Particularism and the Calvinist Quest for 'Holy Uniformity,'" *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte* 82 (1991), 242.

10 An underground church council existed before 1572 because in 1568, Alba sentenced Couwenberch Piertersse with banishment and confiscation of goods for serving on "the church council of Calvinist sect." Marcus, 177. H. J. Selderhuis, *Handbook of Dutch Church History* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co., 2015), 221–222.

11 Guido de Brès, *Confession de foy, faite d'un commun accord par les fidèles qui conversent ès Pays Bas, lesquels desirent vivre selon la pureté de l'evangile de notre Seigneur Jesus Christ.: Avec une remonstrance aux magistrats …* [Lyon]: [S. Barbier voor J. Frellon], 1561. De Brès, *Belydenisse des gheloofs. Ghemaekt met een ghemeyn accoort door de gheloovighe, die in de Nederlanden over al verstroyt zijn …* [*Emden*]: [*Gillis van der Erven*], *1562.* "Belgic Confession" and "Reformed (Dutch) Church" in *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge II*, ed. Samuel Jackson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952),

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Confession before 1571, but given her youth (she was roughly seventeen in 1571) and the importance of its approval at Emden it is likely that she began writing her condensed version based on this document in 1572. Teellinck's version faithfully repeats the essence of de Brès' confession but is original as well; she reordered his 37 articles of faith and omitted eight of them. Her handwritten text fulfilled a pressing demand for works that explained what Calvinists believed and how this faith differed from other religious creeds at a moment when recent Spanish repression and control made obtaining written Calvinist materials in Dutch very difficult. Moreover, the fact that Teellinck's confession was logically organized, written in an easily readable style, and brief must have contributed to its attractiveness especially for an audience of lay people recopying materials by hand. The continuing relevance and popularity of Teellinck's confession is that its model, the Belgic Confession by De Brès, was adopted again at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–1619).

Within her newly flourishing Reformed community, Cornelia continued to write religious poetry, married a pious merchant named Antonie Limmens (d. 1576), grieved his death after two years of marriage, and died herself five weeks later at the young age of 23.[12] For thirty years following her death, Cornelia's works circulated in manuscript. Then in 1607 her sister Susanna took the initiative to publish them under the title *A Short Confession of Faith*. This book includes a seven-page preface by Susanna in which she provided a brief biography of Cornelia and outlines the reasons for publishing Cornelia's works, a short poem by Susanna's son, the Zierikzee statesman and esteemed humanist author, Adrian Hoffer (1580–1644) recommending the book, Cornelia's twelve-page confession of faith, and nine of Cornelia's poems, which Susanna described as "educational and edifying."[13] In spite of the fact that the title of the book only mentions Cornelia's confession, the twenty-one pages of poems

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32, 427. http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/encyc02/Page_32.html, retrieved 2016-02-25. Carl Bangs, "Arminius and the Reformation," *Church History* 30 (1961), 159. J. Hovius, *Notities Betreffende de Synode Te Emden, 1571 En Haar Artikelen* (Kampen: J. H. Kok B. V., 1972). "De Acta der Emdensche Synode van 1571" in *Acta van de Nederlandsche Synoden der zestiende eeuw*, ed. F. L. Rutgers (Utrecht; 's-Gravenhage: Kemink; Nijhoff, 1889), 56.

12 *Cornelia Eeuwoutsdr. Teelinck*, in: *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. URL: http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Teelinck [09/04/2016].

13 Susanna describes the whole work thus: "Dit sommierlijck verhael hares levens, ende stervens, ende dese hare corte belijdenisse des Gheloofs, met noch eenighe andere leersame ende stichtelijcke Stucxkens in dichte van haer over-ghebleven …", Susanna's preface to Teellinck, 9. Her poems are as follows: 1. "Refereyn", 26–28; 2. "Nieuwe-Iaer Liedeken, op de wijse: Ontwaeck O Israel", 29–30; 3. "Eenen Christelijcken A, B, C," 31–35; 4. Onderwijsinghe voor Coninghen ende Princen," 36–37; 5. "De Thien Gheboden, Rijmsche Wijse," 37–40; 6. "Een Liedeken, op de wijse Mijn ziel maeckt groot den Heer", 40–43; 7. "Een Ander, op de

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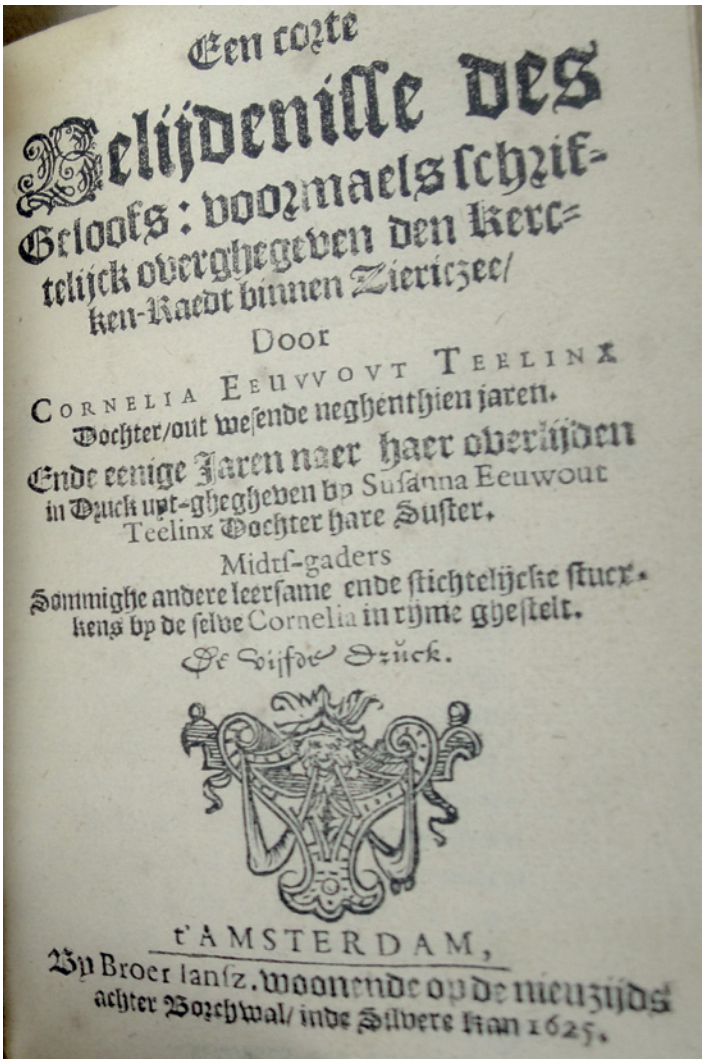
Een corte
Belijdenisse des
Geloofs: voormaels schrift-
telijck overghegeven den Kerc-
ken-Raedt binnen Ziericzee/
Door
CORNELIA EEUVVOVT TEELINX
Dochter/out wesende neghenthien jaren.
Ende eenige Jaren naer haer overlijden
in Druck upt-ghegheven by Susanna Eeuwout
Teelinx Dochter hare Suster.
Midts-gaders
Sommighe andere leersame ende stichtelijcke stuck-
kens by de selve Cornelia in rijme ghestelt.
De Vijfde Druck.
t'AMSTERDAM,
By Broer Iansz. woonende op de nieuwijds
achter Bozchwal/ inde Silvere Han 1625.

FIGURE 2.1 Cornelia Ewouts Teellinck, *Een Corte Belijdenisse Des Geloofs: Voormaels Schriftelijck Overghegeven Den Kercken-Raedt Binnen Ziericzee* (Amsterdam: Broer Jansz., [fifth edition] 1625), Leiden University Library

comprises the largest section of the volume and is the most remarkable for its originality and political engagement.

wijse Onze vader in hemelrijck", 43–45; 8. "Een ander ghemaekt op haer Mans overlijden, op de wijse: Onse vader in hemelrijck," 45–47; 9. "Sonnet," 47.

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According to Susanna, the popularity of the manuscript was one of her reasons for publishing it. She wrote that during Cornelia's life and after her death "godly persons had read and praised" copies of this work and "had advised and even entreated" Susanna to make it available to "all believers in Christ" by publishing it.[14] The fact that Cornelia's work was reprinted five times by 1625 further speaks to its popularity among contemporaries. It also serves as a reminder of the poor survival rate of even popular texts reprinted many times in this period by women, since only one known copy of this work is extant and we have no information about the previous editions.

An even more important goal in publishing Cornelia's book was the desire to spread one unified orthodox doctrine. This early agreement on and wide propagation of clear articles of faith was one of the most important reasons for Calvinism's success in the Northern Netherlands. The Teellincks expressed an explicit awareness of the need to promote religious unity that echoes these concerns in de Brès' confession. Susanna introduces and concludes Cornelia's confession of faith with the hope that its publication would lead to greater unity. In the introduction, Susanna wrote that she hoped to advance "the establishment of [God's] community … that God's Church and many of its weak members may band together through this confirmation of belief in order to follow such a very edified Christian life as … my sister lived …"[15] Susanna's brief conclusion following the confession of faith repeats this sentiment: "Brothers and sisters beloved of the Lord, my heart's wish for you is Paul's admonition [Phil. 2:2], that you unite in Christ so that we may be steadfast in our belief."[16] Cornelia also expressed this desire in the final article of her confession. She advised her fellow church members to be mindful that:

14 "Welcke hare belijdinghe onder my berustende, soo in haer leven, als wanneer sy is den Heere salichlijck ontslapen was, ende oock by eenighe Godtvruchtighe Persoonen ghelesen, ende ghepresen, ja na gheschreven, ende ghecopieerte ick goed ghevonden hebbe, niet sonder toeradinghe, ja stercke af biddinghe der selver nu eyndelick dertich Iaren nae haren doot, door den druck allen Christ-gelovighen menschen, ende met namen u lieden, weerde, ende lieve Susters in den Heer, deelachtich te maecken." Susanna's preface to Teellinck, 4.

15 "… de stichtinge sijner Gemeynte … Dat de Kercke Godes, ende vele swacke leden der selver door dusdanighe belijdenissen, vergheselschapt met sulck een Christelijck leven, als de voor-ghenoemde mijne Suster … gheleyt heft, seer ghesticht warden, en is mijns voornemens niet wijdt-loopich te bewijsen, als wesende sulckx eenen yeghelijcken ghenoechsaem bekent." Susanna's preface in Teellinck, 5.

16 "Broeders/ ende Susters inden Heere bemint/ Ic wensche van herten na Paulus vermaen [Phil 2.2] Dat ghy alle in Christo eens zijt ghesint/ Op dat wy inden Gheloove moghen blijven staen." Teellinck, 25.

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> Our Lord … Jesus Christ so loved his elect Church … and cared for her and protected her … so that we may also as members of his church, walk in a brotherly and Christian manner, and help others in their need, … strengthen the weak, and love the fallen brothers, and admonish them according to the rules and institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ. The … reason we are moved to do these things is to maintain the unity of belief … to preserve the peace, joy, fortification, and unity of the body of Christ in honor of God.[17]

While in the original text De Brès expressed this in article 28 of 36 total, Cornelia highlights the significance of this point by concluding her confession with it. By writing and propagating this confession, Cornelia and Susanna inspired their co-religionists to remain loyal to their new beliefs, reaffirmed the agreed upon tenets of the faith, and provided a clear outline of beliefs for those interested in converting.

Not only did Cornelia provide all of her fellow Calvinists with an orthodox creed that promoted confessional unity and a sophisticated contradiction of Catholic belief, but she also bravely took responsibility for her statement of beliefs. At the end of *A Short Confession of Faith* she added: "Here I have written the foundation of my belief based on the examination of Holy Scripture, and as a sign that I am not ashamed, I have also included my name."[18] Instead of safely authoring an anonymous text, Cornelia chose to make herself vulnerable to judicial punishment by boldly signing her work. She had witnessed the sentencing of many of her townsmen for confessing the Calvinist faith in 1567 and 1568.[19] Although Spanish justice did not pursue many women, Dutch religious scholar Liesbeth Geudeke has noted that there were at least two women

17 "Onse Heer … Jesus Christus … sijn uytvercoren Ghemeynte bemint/ ende lief ghehadt/ end over haer sorghe ghedraghen/ ende haer bewaert als den Appel sijner Ooghen/ insghelijcken willende dat wy oock/ als Lidtmaten sijner Ghemeynten/ broederlijck ende Christelijck wandelen/ den anderen behulpelijck zijn in der noot … den swacken versterckende/ ende den ghevallen broederen lieflijck/ ende Christelijck vermanende na den reghel ende instellinghe onses Heeren Jesu Christi … Het fondament van desen/ daer door wy verweckt worden om t'selve te doen/ is de eenicheyt des gheloofs/ ende des gheestes/ tot bewaringhe van vrede/ vreuchde/ stichtinge/ ende eenicheyt des lichaems Christi/ op dat ooc God in sijner Ghemeynte geeert werde." Teellinck, 23–25.

18 "Hier heb ick den gront mijns Gheloofs gheschreven. Na uyt-wijsen der H. Schriftuere verheve, Ende tot een teeeken dat ixc my niet en schame, Heb ick hier onder ghestelt mijnen name." Teellinck, 25.

19 For example, Rochus Adrian Hoffer's sentence included that he: "heeft bekentenis van de Calvinistische Leere gedaen." Marcus, 177–178.

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sentenced in absentia because they had served as elders in early Reformed communities.[20] In the face of potential danger, Teellinck modeled the behavior she expected from her fellow church members. As she advised them: God is "… our help and representative … do not be ashamed to confess his name …"[21] She taught that openly claiming the Calvinist faith was an important spiritual action especially because it was a potentially dangerous one.

In addition to the threat of judicial sanction, the Teellincks and their communities faced Alba's 1572 military campaign aimed at eradicating Calvinism and frightening Netherlandish cities into submission. His troops sacked Mechelen, Zutphen, and Naarden. Spain followed these violent attacks with sieges at Haarlem (1572–3), Middelburg (1573), Leiden (1574), and – most importantly for Cornelia and Susanna – Zierikzee (1575–6).[22] Although Cornelia likely lived with her husband in Antwerp during the siege of her hometown, she certainly must have heard dramatic accounts of the event and knew people who had suffered and died. After nine months of holding the Spanish at bay, the rebels in Zierikzee capitulated in July 1576.[23] But within hours, the starving troops whom Spain had failed to pay mutinied against official orders. They attacked the city to extract booty from the inhabitants and then they abandoned it.[24] In the following weeks and months, Spain's unpaid and hungry Army of Flanders ran amok across the Low Countries in what contemporaries coined the "Spanish Fury". The mutineers headed to Cornelia's new home of Antwerp and attacked on November 4, 1576, and over the following several days murdered men, women, and children and took everything they could.[25]

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20 Geudeke, 67–86.

21 "… Onse hulpe/ end' voorspreecker tot allen ty/ Ende gheen ander/ soo wy lesen claer/ Dus wilt u niet schamen te belijden sijn name …" Teellinck, "Nieuwjaers liedeken, op de wijse Ontwaeckt ô Israël," 30. Compare with Matthew 10:25–33 for the connection between confessing the faith and a willingess to die a martyr.

22 Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 232–234; Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 178.

23 H. Uil, "Ten Geleide" in *Adrianus Hofferus (1589–1644): drie opstellen over Hofferus' ambtelijke loopbaan, godsdienstige positie en literaire betekenis, alsmede gravures en een bloemlezing uit zijn "Nederduytsche poëmata*, Op 't Hof et al. eds. (Amsterdam: Stichting Neerlandistiek VU, 1993), 6.

24 Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 199.

25 Although Cornelia's husband died right around this time, neither Cornelia nor Susanna wrote that he perished at the hands of the mutineers so it seems likely he survived the sack only to die shortly thereafter. Susanna wrote that Cornelia survived her husband by only five weeks. And, based on the archives of the orphanage in Zierikzee Cornelia died

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The violence they suffered from 1572 to 1576 pushed Protestant and Catholic Netherlanders to cooperate in order to expel the mutineers and the governors who succeeded Alba. In fact, within days of the attack on Antwerp the provinces, both loyal and rebel, opened negotiations with one another that led to the Pacification of Ghent.[26] During this period many inhabitants of the Netherlands had experienced the physical and psychological impact of the Council of Troubles and the brutality of the Army of Flanders. Certainly this was true for Cornelia and Susanna who had opportunities to witness the troops' cruelty firsthand. The fact that these women were loyal members of the Reformed Church when Alba and his successors attempted to wipe out every stronghold of Calvinism left an indelible mark on their written work.

2 International Political Debate

Emboldened by the immediacy of traumatic warfare and persecution, Teellinck thundered like a political prophet in her poetry, a fact which has thus far gone unremarked.[27] Far from eschewing political debate, she expressed her support of the Revolt through vehement expressions of anti-Spanish sentiments in four of the nine poems included at the end of *A Short Confession of Faith*. Teellinck adapted images of tyranny and victimization similar to those that filled the pages of contemporaneous patriotic prints, songs, and literature since the arrival of Alba in 1567 and combined these with biblical prophecy to explain why God had allowed Spain to attack, vilify the enemy, counsel all the leaders involved, and advise her contemporaries how to win the war.

Teellinck's poetry responds to and builds upon the upsurge in patriotic broadsheets, ballads, and chronicles during the early period of the Dutch Revolt. William of Orange directly sponsored some of this propaganda. After

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prior to January 21, 1577 in Middelburg because that was when her one-year-old daughter Katrijnken was transported back to her family in Zierikzee. *Cornelia Eeuwoutsdr. Teelinck*, in: *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. URL: http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Teelinck [09/04/2016].

26 Israel, 186.

27 Although Cornelia Teellinck's publication has been known since at least 1936, scholars have only written brief biographical sketches; The impact of the war with Spain on her work has not yet been studied. See: Meertens, "Cornelia Teellinck." *Nederlandsch archief voor kerkgeschiedenis Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 28 (1936): 209–11. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "De Vrouwelijke Blik", 22–24. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, et al eds., *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*, 132–134. De Jeu, 244–245. John Exalto, *Gereformeerde heiligen: de religieuze exempeltraditie in vroegmodern Nederland* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2005), 141.

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his 1568 attempt to provoke a popular uprising against Spain failed, he employed a number of highly skilled propagandists, such as his secretary Marnix of St. Aldegonde, who had studied with Calvin and Beza in Geneva, to win support for his cause.[28] Many of the authors and artists responsible were Protestant emigrants who transformed "histories" of the events into "propaganda" by sharpening the messy distinctions between those supporting and those suppressing the uprising into clear, opposing groups of innocent victims and guilty oppressors.[29] These include the well-known engravers Frans Hogenburg, who was exiled from Antwerp in 1568 and went to Cologne, and Theodor de Bry, who was forced to leave Liège in 1570 and later settled in Frankfurt. Both of these artists produced prints in Germany that were reused many times in Netherlandish publications well into the seventeenth century.

During the 1560s and 1570s, the most noteworthy feature of this propaganda is its condemnation of Spain's violence against the inhabitants of the Netherlands. Many authors and artists depicted judicial executions, military violence, and the unsanctioned assault of Netherlandish cities by Spain's mercenary troops. A 1568 song gives a sense of how contemporary inhabitants of the Low Countries described Spanish violence: "With your teeth dripping with blood … you come to these Netherlands … To hang, murder, and burn, to decapitate all with haste …"[30] Similar messages were conveyed visually in prints, such as a series of twenty-one prints condemning Spanish violence crafted by Hogenburg. His depictions of the sack of Naarden and executions following the siege of Haarlem (Figs. 2.2, 2.3) are illustrative examples.

These images portray Spanish soldiers engaged in gruesome brutality, shooting, stabbing, beheading, and hanging unarmed men, and killing women and children who have been dragged from their homes. In the depiction of Naarden, Spanish troops massacre families in the market square as fire engulfs the city, while in the print of Haarlem, Hogenburg foregrounds the religious roots of the conflict by depicting the men of the garrison in line to be hanged and decapitated as martyrs facing death under the aegis of Catholic priests.

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28 James Tanis and Daniel Horst, *Images of Discord: A Graphic Interpretation of the Opening Decades of the Eighty Years' War* [*De Tweedracht Verbeeld: Prentkunst Als Propaganda Aan Het Begin van de Tachtigjarige Oorlog*] (Bryn Mawr, Pa.; Grand Rapids: Bryn Mawr College Library; W. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 89. Israel, 161–2; See also Mulier and A. E. M. Janssen, eds., *Willem van Oranje in de Historie 1584–1984: Vier eeuwen beeldvorming en geschiedschrijving* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1984), 10–12. Selderhuis, 216.

29 Meertens, *Letterkundig Leven in Zeeland*, 192–194. Arnade, 212.

30 Tanis and Horst, 27.

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FIGURE 2.2 Frans Hogenburg, *Sack of Naarden 1572*. In Frederik Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen. Beredeneerde beschrijving van Nederlandsche historieplaten, zinneprenten en historische kaarten*. Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1863

Many later authors reprinted these images in their own works to stir up sympathy for the Protestant cause and anger against Spain and Catholics.[31]

Teellinck's political poetry similarly vilifies Spain for these atrocities, but it does so without ever using the names of any contemporary people or places. Instead Teellinck employed biblical allegory to recount the tumultuous history of the 1560s and 1570s. The story particularly favored by the Calvinist inhabitants of the Northern Provinces cast them as the Israelites, God's "chosen people."[32] In spite of their elect status, God had abandoned their fatherland

31 For instance: Willem Baudartius, *Afbeeldinghe, ende beschrijvinghe van alle de veld-slagen,* [...] *ghevallen in de Nederlanden, geduerende d'oorloghe teghens den coningh van Spaengien* (T'Amsterdam: By Michiel Colijn, 1615) and Joannes Gijsius, *Oorsprong en Voortgang der Neder-Landtscher Beroerten ende Ellendicheden* [...], 1616. See Pipkin, *Rape in the Republic, 1609–1725: Formulating Dutch Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 76.

32 Willem Frihoff, "Religious Toleration in the United Provinces: From 'case' to 'model'" in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, eds. R. Po-Chia Hsia and Henk F. K. van Nierop (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 71–2; See also Simon Schama's section on patriotic scripture: Schama, *The Embarassment of Riches: An*

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FIGURE 2.3 Hogenburg, *Murder in Haarlem following the siege of 1573*. In Frederik Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen. Beredeneerde beschrijving van Nederlandsche historieplaten, zinneprenten en historische kaarten*. Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1863

Israel to Babylon (also: Babel and Assyria) as punishment for sin, just as God had allowed the Netherlands to be assaulted by Spain. Through this popular allegory, Teellinck's audience would have unmistakably recognized that the enemy of God's 'chosen' people was Spain.

Among the new converts to Calvinism, this allegory was a means of explaining why God would allow the Spanish assault precisely when Calvinism was gaining popularity. This religious explanation for their persecution circulated among Protestant Netherlanders prior to the circulation of Teellinck's poetry, as evinced by the series of four prints entitled *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories*, which was published sometime between 1570 and 1572.[33] Given its availability in the early 1570s, this series may have served as Teellinck's poetic

Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 93–125.

33 This was possibly published in Emden based on the prints' occasional use of a Germanic dialect and this city's popularity with Dutch Calvinist exiles. F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 109.

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inspiration. It gives equal attention to four distinct eras in Netherlands history: 1) an idyllic, distant Godly past, 2) a recent past when the Netherlands became foolish and vain, 3) the current period of religious disputes in which God allows his people to be punished and 4) a future in which God will destroy those whom he had allowed to punish his people, namely Spain. Teellinck's political poetry employs this timeline, but she concentrated on the final two periods that were doubtlessly the most relevant to Netherlandish victims of Spanish violence in the 1570s. A close look at how the anonymous artist depicted the Netherlands and the enemy in the third and the fourth prints in this series will help illuminate Teellinck's poems.

In both images, the Netherlands is represented in allegorical form as an unnamed, naked female figure. In the print depicting the current period of warfare and religious disputes (Fig. 2.4), she is bound and trampled on by a soldier and a female personification of violence wearing the lion skin of Hercules, both figures clutching a single sword. Around these figures men slaughter the cities or provinces of the Netherlands. In the print depicting the future (Fig. 2.5), the Netherlands has repented her sinful acts that had brought on God's punishment. Kneeling, she beseeches God in prayer and he answers with the destruction of her enemy and a crown.[34]

The artist depicts the enemy of the Netherlands as the rod God uses to punish his people – a common image taken from Isaiah 10:5–6 in which God calls the king of Assyria (a synonym for Babylon) "the rod of mine anger." In the print on the left the enemy is a soldier in Spanish dress with a birch rod on his helmet. The inscription describes him as "a rod, cruel and proud" sent by God "to ruin country and people with bloodthirsty robbers."[35] The hand of God holds the rod affixed to the soldier's helmet to demonstrate that the soldier is just a tool. As in other propaganda from this period, the rod can be identified as Alba.[36] In the final print God has thrown the enemy into the fire with

34 For a full analysis of this series see Tanis and Horst, 96–101.

35 "… Goot gyfft dat rycke lantt tot en rooff/ Enn sendt eyn Roede vredt een hoichmoedich/ Verderfft landt und luid myt Roevers bludich." Anon., *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories* (A series of four prints), Etchings, ca. 1570–1572, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, 24.1 Geom. 2° (16b-3).

36 See for instance the following which depict the Duke of Alva as the rod God uses to punish the Netherlands: Anon., *The Throne of the Duke of Alva I*, engraving, 1569, Stichting Atlas Van Stolk, Historisch Museum, Rotterdam; Anon., *The Throne of the Duke of Alva II*, engraving, c. 1569, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht; anon., *Pendant on the Troubles in the Netherlands*, after 1570, engraved silver medallion, Rijksmuseum Het Koninklijk Penningkabinet, Leiden; anon., *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories*; Tanis and Horst, 51–53, 60–61, 96–101. See especially p. 99.

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Dye quade Werlt Esaus tyt: 4. Esdre: 6
So dwalt men in seedenn dor twist iut geloof.
Got gyfft dat rycke lantt tot eyn rooff.
Enn sendt eyn Roede vredt enn hoichmoedich,
Verderfft landt vnd lüid myt Roeuers bludich.

FIGURE 2.4 Anon., *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories*, print 3, "The Evil World". [*Religiöse Allegorien von Herzog von Alba als Rute Gottes*, 4 Bll., ohne Titelbl, print 3, "Dije quade Werlt … mijt Roeuers bludich"]. Herzog August Library, Wölfenbuttel (24.1 Geom. 2° (16b-3)).

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Wee w, Motten ſullen w Beedde ſyn, Wormen v decke, Eſai: 14
Noot dringt tot gott Noot lehrt biddenn ſchir
Goot werpt de geſlagen Roeid int fwir
End ſtrafft Aſſur ſcholt nha ſiner daet
Hi is wys dye dyt werck gads verſtaat
Eſai: 10

FIGURE 2.5 Anon., *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories*, print 4, "Woe To You." [Religiöse Allegorien von Herzog von Alba als Rute Gottes, 4 Bll., ohne Titelbl, print 4, "Wee uu, Motten …"]. Herzog August Library, Wölfenbuttel (24.1 Geom. 2° (16b-4)).

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a millstone around his neck where the devil and the whore of Babylon await him.[37] The inscription describes the action: "God casts the beaten rod in the fire, and punishes Assyria proud of his deed."[38]

Teellinck likewise described the Spanish enemy as the rod of God in her political poetry. She explained that even in times of trouble God is in control: "We know Lord that as the fierce tyrants inflict this trouble [and these] evil atrocities upon us … That you are a Lord who always controls these by your hand as a means to avenge and punish the land."[39] Both Teellinck and the artist responsible for *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories* disempowered and ridiculed their earthly enemy by characterizing the Spanish as God's tool. The logic was that although the Spanish seem strong it is God alone who makes them appear so and in fact, the proud Spanish are fools blind to the truth that they are merely agents of God who will soon be discarded.

Although Teellinck believed the Spanish to be merely God's tool, she nonetheless condemned them for attacking the Netherlanders. Her poetry frequently described Spain's cruelty, and each time it emphasizes their practice of spilling the blood of martyrs. For example, Teellinck complained to God about Spain's brutality: "the empire of Babylon … is drunk in the overflowing blood of your servants. Its cruelty shows no reluctance as it oppresses your servants good and pious."[40] By frequently accusing the enemy of killing martyrs, she underscored the idea that the victims of Spanish violence were fervent Calvinists dying for their religious beliefs. Teellinck emphasized Spain's ruthless attempts to suppress Calvinism again in the following: "… the tyrants … shed the blood of his servants thinking its value less than water … By burning, hanging, drowning, and stabbing with a sword, they hoped to wipe out

37 Compare with Revelations 18:21: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=revelations+18&version=KJV.

38 "Goot werpt de geslagen Roeid int fwir/ End strafft Assur stolt nha siner daet." *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories*, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, 24.1 Geom. 2° (16b-4).

39 "Wy weten/ Heer/ dat dit ghequel/ Het welck ons de tyrannen fel/ Aen doen door haer practijcken boos/ Dat ghy/ een Heer zijt die altoos De selve stueret door u hant/ Tot wraeck/ end' straffe van het lant." Teellinck, "Een ander, op de wijse: Onse Vader in Hemelrijck," 44.

40 "V. O Godt/ verhoort ons na u woort/ Het rijck van Babel doch verstoort/ Het welck in uwer knechten bloet/ Heel droncken is in overvloet/ End' noch met wreetheyt sonder schroom/ Verdruckt dijn knechten goet/ end vroom." Teellinck, "Een ander, op de wijse: Onse Vader in Hemelrijck," 44.

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God's magnificent word."[41] While warning the Netherlanders to avoid evil, she explained Spain's slavish adherence to Catholicism and argued that this is the cause of their ensuing cruelty:

> Hear ye all people, From East, West, South, and North, grand and small of status … Shun Babylon the city, The Whore with her chalice from which she pours much terror and poison upon the earth. [Also shun] all those who serve her and obey her commands. From this cup she also freely serves her loyal Kings, Emperors, and Lords …[42]

Here Teellinck referred to the prophecy found in Revelations 18, which foretells the destruction of the whore of Babylon, in order to warn her fellow Netherlanders to avoid heresy and sin. First, she admonished her people to keep away from the city of Babylon, by which she meant the places where people practiced Catholicism and engage in other sinful acts. Second, she told them to not take in the teachings spread by the Whore of Babylon – a frequent allegory for the papacy or Roman Catholic Church in anti-Catholic Reformation propaganda.[43] Simultaneously, she explained that because worldly rulers imbibe the poisonous teachings poured out by the Whore of Babylon they aid her attack on true Christians:

> … malicious Babylon harshly afflicts her adversaries with suffering, and countless cruelties, she abuses the Lord's name in this earthly valley. We are bitterly pursued by war and troubled times … Just like a drunken fool, always craving a cup, So Babel thirsts savagely after the blood of martyrs which in a frenzy she spills.[44]

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41 "… der tyrannen … Opt bloet sijner knechten sal hy hebben acht/ Twelck zy als water van cleynder waerde/ Vergoten hebben … Met branden/ hangen/ drencken/ end' dooden met den zwaerde Meynden zy uyt te roeyen Gods-woort verheven …" Teellinck, "Refereyn," 26–27.

42 "I. Aenhoort ghy menschen hoort Van Oost/ West/ Suyd end' Noord/ Groot/ end' cleyn van wat staten/ Wilt doch niet langher gaen Tot Babel/ of die voorstaen/ Of Godt sal ons verlaten. II. Vliet Babylon de Stadt/ De Hoer met haer drinckvat Daer zy uyt schenckt op aerden/ Veel grouwels/ end' venijn Al die haer dienaers zijn/ End' haer ghebodt aenvaerden. III. Van desen dranck heeft sy Oock ingheschoncken vry/ Coninghen/ Vorsten/ Heeren/ Die tot haer zijn ghewent …" Teellinck, "Een liedeken, op de wijse: Mijn ziel maeckt groot den Heere," 40–43.

43 See for example, Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Pope as the Whore of Babylon* (1545), woodcut by Master M. S. (from Cranach's workshop), 1545. Found at: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=3321.

44 "VI. Hierom heeft Babel wreet/ Vervolght/ benaut met leet/ Al die daer wederstreden/ Haer gruw'len sonder ghetal/ End' in dit aerdtsche dal/ Des Heeren Naem beleden. VII. Ghy seght end' het is waer, Wy worden benout swaer Met Oorloogh end' dier tijden …

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In Teellinck's estimation, the Spanish were taken in by the teachings of Catholicism and thereby overcome by a cruel desire to wipe out Calvinists. She characterized the attack as a murder of Christian martyrs to inspire the Netherlandish Calvinists to rise up against such atrocity.

Another of her depictions of Spanish cruelty and heresy reveals an additional characteristic frequently ascribed to them: "… evil Babel, who is so haughty and proud … is drunk on the blood of martyrs …[45] In addition to killing Christians, the Spanish are full of false pride in their power and in the notion that they are righteously killing heretics. De Bry published an engraving c. 1570–1572 featuring Alba entitled *The Captain of Folly* that provides an explanation of the connection between tyranny, pride and madness. The verses that encircled his image state: "When a tyrant is a fool beware … Pride drives insane he who pushes wisdom aside … Blindness of the heart makes terrible madness."[46] Teellinck's work echoes this characterization of the Spanish: led by proud, foolish tyrants, they have devolved into vicious, raging, heretical madness. She called the Netherlanders to fight by vilifying the Catholic Spanish as those who had atrociously murdered innocent Netherlandish Christians in a mad frenzy.

Rather than refer to Alba specifically, Teellinck used "tyrants" as a heading for all Spanish representatives in the Netherlands and emphasized characteristics assigned to Alba in many other tracts and prints from 1567 onward. Teellinck's contemporary audience would have recognized the implicit condemnation of his misbehavior, which included his haughty pride, viciousness, the mistaken belief that he was powerful in his own right, that he could assault with impunity the people of the Netherlands whom he should be protecting, and his greed manifested by his plundering of wealthy cities.[47]

IX. Ghelijck een dronckaert sot/ Altijt haeckt na den pot/ Soo dorst Babel bloetgierich Na t' Martelaren bloet T'welck zy met overvloet Is stortend' onbestierich." Teellinck, "Een liedeken, op de wijse: Mijn ziel maeckt groot den Heere," 40–43.

45 "… Babel stout/ Die haer soo hooveerdich end' hoogmoedich hout/ Die haer soo hooveerdich end' hoogmoedich/ End' droncken is gheworden int bloet der Martelaren." Teellinck, "Refereyn", 27.

46 Theodoor de Bry, *The Captain of Wisdom* and *The Captain of Folly*, engraving, ca 1570–1572, published by de Bry, Bryn Mawr College Library in Tanis and Horst, 85.

47 "Hoort ghy Coninghen/ Princen/ en Vorsten machtich/ Ghy Regeerders des Landts wilt zijn ghedachtich/ Dat ghy ontfanghen hebt uwe authoriteyt / Van den God der glorien en der eeuwicheyt … Want ghy Dienaers end Stadhouders des Heeren zijt/ Gestelt om te heerschen over 't aertrijck wijt/ End u ghewelt te ghebruycken tot strafe der boosdaders/ End' om den onschuldighen te beschermen …" Teellinck, "Onderwijsing voor Coningen en Princen," 36–37.

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What makes Teellinck's poetry quite distinct from other contemporary patriotic texts and prints is that it does not rally support for William of Orange.[48] Only once in her poem entitled "Instruction for Kings and Princes" did Teellinck address him. And even then she did not name William specifically or praise him, but instead counseled him alongside all other rulers, and emphasized all rulers' subordination to God:

> … Servants and Stadholders of the Lord are placed to rule over the earthly realm, and use your violence to punish the evil and to protect the innocent as Fathers. This is why he exalted you his servants … For it is you who should serve as a beacon for your subjects … to warn them to fear God and to serve according to his word … You need to love the fear of the Lord more than you love gold.[49]

Teellinck's refusal to name William of Orange in her poetry gives the reader the sense that she did not fully support him. While a great deal of other patriotic material explicitly praises him for his piety, humility, and concern for his people, Teellinck advised him to cultivate these virtues.[50] While several prints liken William to the wise, biblical king Solomon and praise the former's and wisdom, Teellinck offered him the following advice: "despise your own wisdom, and … with humility follow Solomon's teachings."[51] It is likely that Teellinck fell in line with the more militant Calvinists who distrusted William because of his early ties to Spanish royal authority, his ambivalence about Reformed practice, and his opposition to Calvinist pretentions to theocracy.[52]

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48 The prince was the focus of much praise in other propaganda. See for instance: Anonymous, *Emblematic Contrast of Orange and Alva*, engraving ca. 1570–1572, Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam in Tanis and Horst, 76–78. For similar images see Tanis and Horst p. 77, 81, 83 85, 87, 92, and 107. See also P. A. M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse opstand in de pamfletten*, 1566–1584 (Nijmegen: Centrale Drukkerij, 1956).

49 "… Dienaers end Stadhouders des Heeren zijt Gestelt om te heerschen over 't aertrijck wijt/ End u ghewelt te ghebruycken tot strafe der boosdaders End om den onschuldighen te beschermen als Vaders/ Daerom ghy die nu zijt sijne dienaers verheven … Want ist dat ghy/ die daer behoort uwe onderdanen. Als lichten te zijn/ ja haer oock te vermanen Godt te vreesen/ end' dienen na sijn Woordt … Maer soo ghy boven t'gout bemint de vreese de Heeren …" Teellinck, "Onderwijsing voor Coningen en Princen," 36–37.

50 See for instance anon., *Emblematic Contrast of Orange and Alva*, and De Bry, *The Captain of Wisdom* and *The Captain of Folly*, engraving, ca 1570–1572, published by De Bry, Bryn Mawr College Library in Tanis and Horst, 82–85.

51 "Hatet eyghen wijsheyt/ end' wilt u begheven/ Te soecken met neersticheydt/ na Salomons reden …" Teellinck, "Onderwijsing voor Coningen en Princen," 37.

52 Arnade, 212. Kaplan, 239–140.

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In this poem Teellinck not only offered advice to all rulers, she also issued a threat: "the God of glory and of eternity will hold you solely accountable for your government according to his wondrous justice."[53] Based on prophecies in Isaiah and Revelations, Teellinck warned all those in power that although they may get away with injustice for a time, they would be answerable to God for all of their actions in the end.

In her poetry Teellinck assumed a position of power incongruent with her youth and sex. She brazenly admonished all rulers in her poems "New Year's Song" and "Instruction for Kings and Princes." In another poem she even commanded God: "Stand up O Lord; show that you are a mighty, blessed God, who out of nothing shaped heaven, Earth, and all that lives. Now by your strong hand complete your unfinished work."[54] Here Teellinck orders God to fulfill his promise to remove his rod from the Netherlands, punish Spain, and free his people from violence.

In addition to her instructions for rulers and God, Teellinck directed her fellow Netherlanders how to win the war against Spain. Rather than call Calvinists to take up arms, she told them simply to repent. She instructed her audience that they would be saved so long as they: "… humbly fall at God's feet, Call to him and wail. He will hear our cries. According to his word he will have compassion for the sinner."[55] This conjures up the image of the Netherlands in the final print of *The Globe with Netherlandish Allegories* (discussed above) in so far as Teellinck described the need for Netherlanders to fall to their knees and beg God for mercy. However, unlike many contemporary depictions of the Netherlanders, Teellinck's poetry does not conjure up a female figure to represent the people, but she uses gender neutral terms like "the sinner" to broadly address her entire audience of men and women. By circumventing the use of an unclothed woman to embody the Netherlands she construed vulnerability and sinfulness as human traits rather than female ones. Similarly, later Dutch

53 "… den God der glorien en der eeuwicheyt / Die oock sal na sijne gherechticheyt groot/ Reeckenschap eyschen van uwe regeringhe bloot …" Teellinck, "Onderwijsing voor Coningen en Princen," 36.

54 "Staet op/ O Heer/ thoont dat ghy zijnt/ Een machtich Godt ghebenedijt/ Die Hemel/ Aerd'/ en al dat leeft/ Te saem/ uyt niet gheschapen heeft/ Wilt nu oock dijn begonnen werck Volvoeren door u hant seer sterck." Teellinck, "Een ander, op de wijse: Onse Vader in Hemelrijck," 45.

55 "XII. Laet ons doch met ootmoet/ Ons' Godt vallen te voet/ Tot hem roepen/ end' kermen/ Hy is die daer verhoort/ Den sondaer nae sijn woort/ End' sijner wilt erbermen. XIII. Hy wil laten sijn straf/ Ons vyanden als kaf/ Verdrijven t'onser vromen/ Is dat wy leven slecht/ Nae sijn woort goet/ end' recht/ En ons des Heeren romen." Teellinck, "Een liedeken, op de wijse: Mijn ziel maeckt groot den Heere," 43.

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poets including Anna Roemers Visscher, Maria Tesselschade Visscher, and Katharijna Lescailje also rejected the common metaphor of the Dutch nation as a vulnerable woman. Like Teellinck, these women preferred alternatives and thus employed images of children or sheep to emphasize human (rather than female) weakness and reliance on God.[56]

Teellinck also admonished Netherlanders to distinguish themselves from their Catholic enemies so that they would not suffer the consequences of sin:

> Turn away from Babel and keep yourself pure from her idolatry and nasty abominations, so that you will not come to sorrow with her and share her sins and plagues … Esteem God's Word … and … hurry to him, and call him in your need. He is the one who will unburden you from sin, and with his blood wash away your crimes so long as you turn to him with humility, and let his words determine your path …[57]

Teellinck did not advise the Netherlanders to fight back, but only to turn to God so that he would remove his rod from them. Teellinck is not alone in her characterization of the Dutch as passive victims of Spanish violence. The Calvinist anti-truce propaganda propagated after 1607 shared this seemingly pacifist approach to defeating Spain. In these tracts, the Dutch were not heroic soldiers facing a martial threat on a battlefield, but rather were unarmed family members surprised by vicious attack.[58]

In Teellinck's estimation, the Netherlanders may have been passive, but their God was certainly not. In her poetry, God alone leads the Revolt and is the sole martial protector of the Netherlands. Except for the poem addressed to "Kings and Princes," her works feature neither strong protagonists nor militant figures other than God. When we consider Teellinck's poetic adaptation of the Ten Commandments, this makes sense because her text relays God's

56 Pipkin, 225–235.

57 "Dus Princelijcke Broeders/ en Susters/ int ghemeene/ Schyt u af van Babel/ en hout u reene/ Van haer Afgoderije/ en grouwelen snoot/ Op dat ghy met haer niet en comt in weene/ End' haer plaghen/ end sonden deelachtich wert met eene/ Die de Heere over haer vercondicht bloot/ Merckt/ end' hebt doch acht op Gods woorden groot/ End' en versmaet niet de aenbiedinghe sijner ghenaden/ Maer wilt tot hem vlieden/ end' roepen in uwen noot/ Hy ist die u van sonden wil ontladen/ End' met sijnen bloede af-wasschen u misdaden/ Als ghy tot hem zijt keerende met ootmoet/ End' na sijnen woorde schickt uwe paden/ Soo sal hy altijt zijn onsen Herder goet. Teellinck, "Refereyn", 28.

58 Arnade, 224. Pipkin, "'They Were Not Humans, but Devils in Human Bodies': Depictions of Sexual Violence and Spanish Tyranny as a Means of Fostering Identity in the Dutch Republic," *Journal of Early Modern History* 13 (2009), 241–242.

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command: "You shall not kill in any manner."[59] For Teellinck, God did not call his devout Christian community to destroy Spain. He was the "powerful Lord … our shield and fortress …"[60] Her poetry described God's plan to fight for the Netherlanders:

> Stand up Jerusalem, God's City and his elect. God will be your comfort and your help and he shall put an end to your destruction … You need not fear sword or enemy for the Lord shall take up your case himself and show all that he is a God of vengeance over those who have persecuted the pious. They will taste his cup of wrath and no longer exalt in their inequities. But he shall … return the sweet inheritance to the pious and turn away all tyranny … from them …"[61]

The sentiment Teellinck expressed here that the Netherlanders need not fear their enemies because God would avenge them is a common one. It appears, for example, in the anonymous print entitled *Emblematic Contrast between Orange and Alba*, which demonstrates that the Israelites have nothing to fear as God himself punishes the Egyptians.[62] This inscription on the print promises that God alone will fight, Spain will be humbled, and the Netherlands will prosper.

According to Teellinck's poetry, it is Spain who should fear because God is far more fearsome than any human opponents:

> [God] will entirely wipe out evil Babel … God will repay her double her plagues and cruelties. She has oppressed all the witnesses of the gospel. Therefore the Lord shall be generous with the pouring out of his wrath and so smite her …[63]

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59 "VI. Ghy en sult niet dooden in eeniger manieren." Teellinck, "De thien Gheboden rijmsche wijse", 39.

60 "O Godt der Goden Heere sterck/ Ghy zijt ons schildt/ end' Bollewerck …" Teellinck, "Een ander, op de wijse: Onse Vader in Hemelrijck," 43.

61 "Staet op Jerusalem Godes Stadt uyt ghelesen/ God wil uwen trooster/ end' hulper wesen/ En sal dijn verwoestheyt een eynde maken/ Ghy die weet / ende draeght sijn Wetten ghepresen/ En wilt niet voor swaert/ of vyant vreesen/ Want de Heere sal selfs aennemen u saken/ En thoonen dat hy is een God der wraken/ Over die den vromen hier persequeren/ Den Beker sijner gramschap sullen zy smaken/ En in hare boosheyt niet altijt glorieren/ Maer de vrome sal hy naer haer begeeren/ Wederom brenghen in haer erfnisse soet/ Ja alle versmaetheyt/ end tyrannie van haer weeren …" Teellinck, "Refereyn", 26.

62 Anonymous, *Emblematic Contrast of Orange and Alva*, in Tanis and Horst, 76–78.

63 "Die noch gantschelick uyt-roeyen sal Babel stout … Maer God sal haer weder inschencken dobbelvout/ Haer plagen/ end' wreetheyt daer met sy heeft benout/ Alle die ghetuygen

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Teellinck's message that God would ferociously avenge Spain's cruelty and persecution was unquestionably attractive to her contemporaries who had survived the Spanish sacks, sieges, and mutinies of the 1570s. Continuing her predictions for Spain's degradation, Teellinck made it clear that God would punish Spain specifically because of its murder of innocent Calvinists. Following a stanza in which she rebuked Spain for spilling the blood of martyrs, she continued:

> Therefore the Lord shall cause Babel to fall, just as it is written, and pour out his terrible wrath over her, and give her just reward. Hastily and swiftly shall Babel's terrible punishment justly befall her …[64]

In her poetry, Teellinck emphasized God's imminent destruction of Spain to avenge their attack on pious Calvinists more than any other theme. This vehement message must have been much appreciated by the victims of Spain's recent violence.

Just as Cornelia Teellinck's poetry demonstrates her concern with politics in the 1570s, Susanna's preparation of this text for publication in 1607 demonstrates her own engagement with political events several decades later. In light of the Spanish commander Ambrogio Spinola's wave of victories starting in 1603 and the conflict between Reformed theologians Jacobus Arminius and Franciscus Gomarus and their followers that began to sow discord among Calvinists after 1604, Susanna and those who published *A Short Confession of Faith* recognized its value in encouraging Dutch confessional unity and published it to help foster cohesion among the Netherlanders.[65] This book's continued popularity, as evinced by the fact that it was reprinted five times between 1607 and 1625, may be explained in part by the continued attractiveness of its poetry that vilified Spain and promised ultimate Dutch victory. Only the fifth edition of this book has survived, published by Broer Jansz, an Amsterdam printer and book seller active between 1613 and 1652. The fact that the books Jansz printed included many other Protestant and patriotic works provides

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van den Evangelio waren/ Daerom de Heere oock sal sonder sparen/ Uutstorten sijnen toorn/ end' haer soo te gronde slaen …" Teellinck, "Refereyn", 27–28.

64 "X. Daerom de Heer oock sal Babel brenghen ten val/ Alsoo ons is bescreven/ End' sijnen toorne swaer/ Utstorten over haer/ End' haren loon haer gheven. XI. Seer haestich/ ende snel/ Sal Babels straffe fel/ Met recht haer over comen …" Teellinck, "Een liedeken, op de wijse: Mijn ziel maeckt groot den Heere," 42–43.

65 Maarten Roy Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*, Trans. Diane Webb. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 23, 30. Selderhuis, 300–307.

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further evidence of the lasting value of Cornelia's anti-Spanish rhetoric among Dutch rebels.[66]

The situation in 1607 when Susanna assembled her sister's works for publication was similar to circumstances of the 1570s when Cornelia authored her works; again, the Spanish were determined to regain control over the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands and were making rapid headway. The Spanish commander Spinola launched a series of very successful attacks on the new Dutch Republic inspiring a wave of panic among the Dutch. He captured a number of towns along the new Republic's eastern border, including: Oldenzaal, Lingen, Rijnberk, and Grenlo as well as the southern port of Ostende and the the Zutphen quarter of Gelderland. Spain could not however maintain this momentum. By 1607 both sides were exhausted, the Spanish treasury was bankrupt, and the adversaries began to negotiate what was to become the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621).

For many devout Calvinists, this was terrible news. They believed that the Dutch should fight Spain until the enemy was expelled from the Republic and they feared that the Spanish planned to use diplomacy as a ruse to catch the Reformed Republic off guard, regain control, and return the Netherlands to Catholicism. In response, these Calvinist authors published a wave of anti-Spanish propaganda between 1607 and 1628 to undermine the negotiations that led to the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621) and throughout the years of armistice and beyond in hopes that they could provoke continued warfare until Dutch troops could force the Spanish out of the Netherlands entirely.[67]

Susanna and those responsible for the five editions of Cornelia's book published between 1607 and 1625 – precisely during this wave of vehement patriotic propaganda – shared the goal of these other Calvinist authors who wanted to reinforce the Netherlanders' resolve to fight during the twelve-year respite and into the period of renewed warfare. Teellinck's political poetry is distinct in that she focused on God's forthcoming vengeance, whereas other Calvinist authors highlighted Spanish atrocities.[68]

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66 The works Jansz published include: Bibles, Philips van Marnix's *De Byen-corf der H. Roomscher Kerk* (1611), accounts of seiges, and anti-Spanish books such as *De Spaensche Tiranije Gheschiet in Neder-lant* (1625). See "Iansz, Broer" in the Short Title Catalogue, Netherlands. URL: http://picarta.nl/DB=3.11/SET=3/TTL=115/REL?PPN=075550261.

67 Ronnie Kaper, *Pamfletten over Oorlog of Vrede. Reakties van tijdgenoten op de vredesonderhandelingen van 1607–1609* (Amsterdam: Historisch Seminarium, 1980), 30–36. Pipkin, "'They Were Not Humans, but Devils in Human Bodies'", 237–238.

68 For example, the anonymous *Mirror of Spanish Tyranny Perpetrated in the West Indies* (1620), a book based on the sixteenth-century Jesuit priest Bartholome de las Casas' writings, and its sequel *The Second Part of the Mirror of Spanish Tyranny Perpetrated in the Netherlands* (1620) catalogue Spanish wrongdoing in the Americas and in Europe in order

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Cornelia and Susanna Teellinck thus both took active roles in the political debates of their time. Cornelia did so explicitly by authoring poetry in the 1570s, in which she adopted some of the conventions of the newly circulating political propaganda and rejected others in order to craft a biblical allegory that explained why God permitted the Spanish to assault the Netherlands. Her poems vilified the Catholic Spanish as proud, bloodthirsty murderers blind to the fact that they were God's tool to punish his "chosen people". This allegory simultaneously provided Teellinck's audience with a patriotic image of Dutch Calvinists as a people who enjoyed exceptional status, concomitant expectations of piety, and optimism that they would be successful in spite of unlikely current prospects. Cornelia's application of biblical prophecy was calculated to inspire her readers to repent, convert to Calvinism, and strictly adhere to its teachings; this tactic allowed her to predict a future in which the godly Calvinists would be victorious. Susanna's publication of Cornelia's materials reinforced the image of the Spanish as terrible villains in the minds of the Dutch in order to incite continuing fear of Spanish reprisals. Both Cornelia's and Susanna's efforts presented their readers with the idea that following God and remaining loyal to the Reformed faith was the best protection against both earthly enemies like Spain and intangible ones including corruption and the devil.

3 Women's Religious Activism

This contextual analysis of Teellinck's *A Short Confession of Faith* has revealed that in the years following 1572 when the Reformed Church could publicly organize but had insufficient numbers of well-trained ministers, Cornelia and Susanna provided their religious community with additional leadership.[69] By writing and circulating manuscript copies of Cornelia's confession of faith they propagated orthodox beliefs among adults. Addressing a broad audience in their written works, these women boldly claimed a public voice with which they fought for Calvinism and for the revolt against the Catholic Spanish. We have already seen that the Teellincks justified their writings based on the need for confessional unity and on popular demand. This section will reveal

to incite a violent Dutch response. Anon., *Den Spiegel der spaensche tÿrannÿe geschiet in West-Indien … in't spaensch beschreven door den E. bisschop Don Fraey Bartholomé de Las Casas.* Anon, *Tweede deel van de Spieghel der spaensche tÿrannÿe gheschiet in Nederlandt …* [door J. E. Cloppenburch.]. Amsterdam: J. E. Cloppenburg, 1620. For more on this see: Pipkin, "'They Were Not Humans, but Devils in Human Bodies'", 231–232.

69 Selderhuis, 224–5, 241.

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additional means by which Cornelia validated her prophetic insights and explore women's capacity to make public religious contributions.

Modern scholarship has provided contradictory views about whether Protestant women like Cornelia and Susanna could publicly voice their religious views and engage in religious activities outside the home. On the one hand, over the last thirty years many scholars have become increasingly optimistic based on the identification of at least 23 devout Reformed women authors active between 1573 and 1700.[70] In spite of the exclusion of women from official positions in the Dutch Reformed Church, scholars of religion Marybeth Carlson and W. J. op 't Hof have even speculated that women were essential proponents of the revival movement called the 'Further Reformation,' whose adherents considered themselves a small, more devout group within the official Reformed Church.[71] This movement, often attributed to Cornelia and

70 In a series of four articles in 1985, 1986, and 1988 each beginning with the title "Vrouwen uit het gereformeerde piëtisme in Nederland", Fred van Lieburg sketched the biographical backgrounds of Sara Nevius, Eva van der Groe, Jacoba Petronella Winckelman, and Aletta Vermeer in the *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*. In 1997 Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen was the lead editor for a great inventory of early modern Netherlandish women's publications; Included were brief biographical sketches for at least 21 pietists between 1573 and 1775 in *Met en zonder lauwerkrans: schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850: van Anna Bijns tot Elise van Calcar: teksten met inleiding en commentaar, eds*. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997). In 2002 and 2007, To this list, De Jeu added six pious Reformed authors not mentioned in *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*: namely, Anna de Veer, Elisabet le Petit, Helena Smunnicx, Cornelia Leydekker, Everarde van Ghent, Grietje van Dijk. De Jeu, 32, 52–57, 253, 271. See also: De Baar, "t En Is Geen Vrouwenwerck Te Spreken in de Kerck. Vrouwen En Religie in de Zeventiende-Eeuwse Republiek Der Verenigde Nederlanden," *DinaMiek: Vrouwengeschiedenis Krant* 5 (1988): 11–25. De Baar, "'Let your women keep silence in the churches'. How women in the Dutch Reformed Church evaded Paul's admonition, 1650–1700," in *Women in the Church: Papers Read at the 1989 Summer Meeting and the 1990 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford, Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by B. Blackwell, 1990), 11–25. De Baar, "Van kerk naar sekte: Sara Nevius, Grietje van Dijk en Anna Maria van Schurman." *De zeventiende eeuw* 7 (1991): 159–66. W. J. op 't Hof, *Het Gereformeerd Pietisme*, (Houten: Den Hertog, 2005), 126.

71 Op 't Hof uncovered two active seventeenth-century pietist women who did not leave behind written publications in: "De Sluise Dienstmaagd Barbara Jobs in Het Licht van Haar Testamenten," *Bijdragen Tot De Geschiedenis Van West-Zeeuws-Vlaanderen* 30 (2002): 79–104, and "Martha Greendon, de vrouw van Willem Teellinck en zijn visie op de vrouw," *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 31 (2007): 131–143. Explaining women's importance within the 'Further Reformation' Op 't Hof hypothesized: "in all likelihood there were (many) more women than men who clung to and strived to attain the ideals" of this movement, because he explains at this time there were more female members of the Reformed Church than men. Op 't Hof, "De Sluise Dienstmaagd Barbara Jobs …", 95. Dutch

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Susanna's nephews Willem (1579–1629) and Eeuwout Teellinck (1571–1629), was akin to English Puritanism. It was a pietistic movement during the seventeenth century whose proponents battled "against what [they] saw as widespread abuses and false doctrines, advocated with prophetic zeal the inner experience of sound doctrine and personal holiness, as well as the radical and total sanctification of all areas of life."[72]

On the other hand, scholars have underestimated Protestant women's written contributions. One mistake has been the failure to recognize the value contemporaries placed on the circulation of manuscripts and the esteem this afforded authors.[73] Although most women's religious writings circulated as manuscripts during their lifetimes and were published posthumously during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many were valued by their religious communities for a long time prior to the publication of their texts.[74] In this

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religious scholar Fred van Lieburg provides more substantial proof of women's importance in similarly strict eighteenth-century Reformed pietist circles in his book *Living for God* by studying laywomen and men's religious writings. Van Lieburg, *Living for God: Eighteenth-Century Dutch Pietist Autobiography* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 131. See also Marybeth Carlson, "In and Out of the Public Church in the Dutch Republic" in *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds*, eds. Susan Dinan and Debra Meyers (New York: Routledge, 2001), 121–124. For an examination of why women joined the Reformed Church in greater numbers see Liesbeth Geudeke, "Positie van vrouwen in de gereformeerde kerk, 1566–1650" in *Vrome vrouwen: betekenissen van geloof voor vrouwen in de geschiedenis*. Tipje van de sluier 10, eds. Mirjam Cornelis and Fred van Lieburg (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1996).

72 Op 't Hof, *Het Gereformeerd Pietisme*, 126. T. Brienen, *De Nadere reformatie: beschrijving van haar voornaamste vertegenwoordigers* ('s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1986). Van Lieburg, "Interpreting the Dutch Great Awakening," 326. Van Lieburg, "From Pure Church to Pious Culture: The Further Reformation in the Seventeenth Century Dutch Republic" in *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, ed. W. Fred Graham (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 409.

73 Margaret J. M. Ezell demonstrated that authors of manuscripts enjoyed as much prestige as those who published their works and many early modern authors did not want their work to be printed in *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). De Jeu noted that many religious works were copied by hand to edify the community and that songs were used in home services and conventicles. De Jeu, 273. Other recent scholarship corrects the modern belief that early modern audiences did not deem adaptations and translations prestigious or valuable. See for instance, Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen, eds., *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

74 Women overlooked in the assessment that Protestant women could not make significant religious contributions until the end of the seventeenth century include: Maria van Hengel, Sibylle van Griethuysen, Maria van der Deliën, Sara Nevius, and Anna Morian, each of whome were actively writing religious texts and circulating them as manuscripts between 1607 and 1686. Moreover, Anna Maria van Schurman published texts as early

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light, the argument that Teellinck's book was deemed acceptable for publication "only because it was explicitly aimed at young women preparing for confession" clearly needs to be reconsidered.[75]

In fact, none of the three authors who contributed material for Cornelia's book addressed only women. Susanna's introduction, her son Adrian's introductory poem, and Cornelia's confession and poetry make it clear that they all hoped to propagate one orthodox version of belief to a broad audience of women and men. Although Susanna's introduction directly spoke to the "young daughters" and "dear sisters in the Lord" to whom she dedicated the publication, there are also several instances in which she also addressed a broader audience.[76] Susanna's text referred to those "Godly persons" who have "read, praised, repeated, and copied" Cornelia's works and who "strongly beseeched" Susanna to make them available. She further specified that "through publication" she hoped to make Cornelia's work "available to all Christ-believing people, and particularly to you worthy and dear Sisters in the Lord."[77] Susanna wrote that she was also motivated to publish "for the glory of God, which all Christians should hold dear above all others, and … for the edification of his congregation.[78] Perhaps most tellingly, Susanna ended Cornelia's confirmation statement with a postscript to her "Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord."[79] Thus, although Susanna dedicated her work to a group of young women

as 1638, Christina van Os in 1677, and Geertuide Sluiter in 1685 – all prior to Geertruyd Gordon's publication in 1686. See Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "De Vrouwelijke Blik, Nederlandse Dichteressen van de Gouden Eeuw" in *De Vrouw in de Renaissance*, eds. Arie-Jan Gelderblom and Harald Hendrix (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), 22. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, et al eds., *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*, 22–24, 50, 132.

75 Schenkveld-van der Dussen, "Cornelia Teellinck," in Van Gemert et al., 217. See also De Jeu, 244–245.

76 "… hebbe ick u lieden, weerde, ende lieve Susters in den Heere, tot een teecken mijner goet-gunstigher gheneghentheydt t'uwaerts, willen toe-eyghenen: op dat ghy, jonghe dochters …" Susanna, preface to Teellinck, 9.

77 "… oock by eenighe Godtvruchtighe Persoonen ghelesen, ende ghepresen, ja na gheschreven, ende ghecopieert, ick goed ghevonden hebbe, niet sonder toeradinghe, ja stercke af biddinghe der selver nu eyndelick dertich Iaren nae haern doot, door den druck allen Christ-gelovighen menschen, ende met namen u lieden, weerde, ende lieve Susters in den Heer, deelachtich te maecken." Susanna, preface to Teellinck, 4.

78 "De redene die my sulcx te doen veroorsaeckt hebben …. De eere Godes, die allen Christenen behoort boven alle andere dinghen lief … te wesen; daerna de stichtinge sijner Gemeynte." Susanna, preface to Teellinck, 5.

79 "Broeders/ ende Susters inden Heere bemint …" Susanna in Cornelia Ewouts Teellinck, *Een Corte Belijdenisse Des Geloofs*, 25. It is possible that Susanna is writing once again, because the final words of this brief postscript are: "The End of her Confirmation" ("Eynde haerder Belijdenisse"), Teellinck, 25.

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seeking church membership, she expected that many more would profit from reading her words and those of her sister.

Susanna's son Adrian also expected an audience of both men and women. In contrast to Susanna, he did not single out young women at all; rather the first line of his dedicatory poem clearly addresses all "fleshly people." Thereafter Adrian referred to the audience as "you". His poem instructs all people to "take these few pages into your hand … read this, reread it again, even write it in your heart …"[80]

Teellinck's confession and poetry likewise addressed a very broad audience. Teellinck asserted one single, orthodox doctrine that was identical for men and women, just as had her model, de Brès' confession. Throughout she used gender-neutral terms including the frequent use of the plural "we", "us", and "our," or referred to the reader as "you," and used "people" to describe men and women. For example, she stated: "God created humankind according to his own image … But the disobedient people … sinned …"[81] As in this example, she emphasized human – not female – sinfulness and powerlessness. She also referred to God's people in general terms such as: the church, the children of God, members of Christ, the God-fearing ones, his community, believers, and his elect.[82] In two of her poems she explicitly addressed her "brothers and sisters."[83] More frequently when Teellinck advised Christians on how to behave, she employed the same language as de Brès' confession of faith – that is, she wrote that they must "express brotherly love toward one another," "walk in a brotherly and Christian manner helping one another in times of need," and "accept the encouragement of others in an affectionate and brotherly manner."[84] She thus imagined the fellowship of Christian believers as a brotherhood – an egalitarian and inclusive ideal that permeates all of her work.

Teellinck also chose not to underscore the fact that she was a woman in her final two poems in spite of the fact that they employ the first person singular "I"

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80 "Neemt maar in uwe hand alleen dees weynigh bladen … Leest dit, herleest het weer, ja schrijft het in uw hert." Hoffer, in Teellinck, 11–12.

81 "… Godt … gheschapen heeft …. den Mensche nae sijn even-beelt/ ende ghelijckenisse … Maer de onghehoorzame Mensche … in sonden ghevallen zijn …" Teellinck, 13.

82 "Kercke," Kinderen Godts," "Ghemeynte," "Gheloovigen," "uytverkoren," "lidmaten Christi," "Godt vresende". Teellinck, 18, 21, 23, 31–32.

83 "Ick wensch u alle, Broeders en Susters, in den Heere", Teellinck, "De thien Gheboden rijmsche wijse", 40. Teellinck, "Refereyn", 28. "K: Keert u mijn broeders/end susters uitvercoren …" In "Een Christelyk A.B.C.," Teellinck, 33.

84 "… broederlijcke liefde draghen tot malcanderen." Teellinck, 23 "… broederlijck ende Christelijck wandelen/ den anderen behulpelijck zijn in der noot …" Teellinck, 24. "Ende oock wederomme de ghene die vermaendt wert is schuldich de vermaninghe lieflijck/ ende broederlijck te ontfanghen …" Teellinck, 24. "M: Minnelijk/ end broederlijck wilt altijdt wandelen/ Als Lidtmaten Christi in vrede soet …" Teellinck, 33.

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and possessive pronoun "my." In her poem "A Song Composed on the Death of her Husband" she discussed her own suffering at length, but she did not mention that she was a grieving wife. Instead she described her pain as one that any spouse may feel at such a time.[85] The only time Teellinck mentions her sex is in the final poem when she referred to herself as God's handmaiden. In spite of this brief mention that she was a woman in the service of God, the rest of the short poem is a prayer that any fellow Calvinist may have prayed. In it the penitent entreats God to forgive sins and to stay near, and expresses the soul's longing for God.[86] Thus even in poetry that communicated some of her most intimate feelings, Teellinck depicted her sentiments as potentially common to all women and men.

The fact that Teellinck circumvented referring to herself as a woman in all but one brief instance meant that she did not follow traditional models of female sanctity. In spite of the continuing popularity of William of St. Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux among some Protestants, she did not adopt the religious style cultivated by the devout, medieval female mystics who followed their teachings. These mystics emphasized their femininity in order to claim a closer connection to Christ as the "Word made flesh" because of the religious conception of women as flesh (as opposed to men as spirit).[87] Similarly Cornelia's contemporary Teresa of Avila (d. 1582) depicted herself as a humble and obedient woman in order to highlight her feminine capacity to achieve mystical union through emotionalism and eroticism.[88] Although Cornelia resembled Teresa in so far as both were allowed to speak, teach, write, and command men, Cornelia never drew attention to her own sex as a basis for her religious authority.[89]

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85 Teellinck, "Een ander, gemaeckt op haers Mans overlyden, op de wijse: Onse Vader in Hemelrijck, 45. Translated as "A Song Composed on the Death of Her Husband" in Van Gemert et al., *Women's Writings from the Low Countries*, 1200–1875, 217.

86 "En wilt, o Heere, door mijne misdaden/ My niet ontrecken uwen Gheest/ Maer wilt doch my uyt louter ghenaden/ Maken u Dienst-maeght onbevreest. En wilt niet van my wijcken, Heere, Want ick niet goets vermach uyt my, Mijn ziel verlanght naer u gaer seere, Maket my doch van sonden vry." Teellinck, "Sonnet," 47.

87 Caroline W. Bynum, "… And woman his humanity": female imagery in the religious writing of the later Middle Ages," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 172, 179.

88 See Jesuit Rodrigo Niño's description of Teresa's activities quoted in Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 164–165.

89 Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 67–84. Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 133.

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Instead of adopting the rhetoric of female submissiveness to explain her capacity to counsel and command, Cornelia based her authority on a God-illuminated understanding of the Scripture. The Bible supplied both her inspiration for prophesy and the marginal proof she supplied for her confession of faith. Like Quaker prophetess Eleanor Davies (1590–1652) born not long after Teellinck's death, Teellinck "saw herself less as a sibyl than as a biblical scholar working to decipher and interpret her own divine messages."[90] That is, Teellinck believed her capacity to prophesy did not originate from an oracle-like, female ability to become an empty vessel through which God spoke directly to his people, but rather from her ability to decode his scripture for her people.[91]

Based on the popularity of Teellinck's work and the inclusion of her poetry in her publication her fellow Calvinists valued her prophetic insights. They certainly agreed with Teellinck that scripture was the most important source of humans' knowledge of God. Moreover, several contemporary Reformed ministers looked favorably on lay prophecy. For example, just prior to the publication of the fifth edition of Teellinck's book her nephew Willem provided biblical evidence supporting the spiritual value of contemporary prophecy in his 1623 *Key to Devotion*. Proposing that even Reformed women could offer religious insights, Willem seconded Moses' exclamation in Numbers 11: "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"[92] Willem employed this passage from scripture to argue that not only a select few should prophesy, but "the entire army of Israel", which includes all Calvinist women and men fighting for the Lord.[93] The idea that Willem included women in the "army of Israel" is reinforced by the fact that in

90 Here I apply Mack's description of Davies to Teellinck. Mack, 91.

91 Mack, 18–19.

92 Numbers 11:29. See the New International Version at http://www.biblegateway.com.

93 "… dat niet alleene/ Eldad ende Medad mochten propheteeren/ maer het gantsche legher Israels." Willem Teellinck, *Sleutel der devotie: ons openende de deure des hemels* (T' Amstelredam: By Johan Evertsz Cloppenborch, Boeckvercooper op't Water over de Coren-Beurs inden vergulden Bybel, 1624), 94. Later pietist Wilhelmus á Brakel more explicitly supported women's prophecy: "God uses all sorts of people to build up his Church, the pious, unpious, young, old, not only men, but also women … God uses women to convert and revive souls … God also pours out his spirit over women and they should prophecy …" "Godt gebruikt tot opbouw van zyne Kerke allerley slag menschen, vroome, onvroome, jonge, oude, mannen niet alleen, maar ook vrouwen: (…) vrouwen gebruikt Godt ook tot bekeeringe en opwekking der zielen (…) Over vrouwen zoude Godt ook zynen Geest uitstorten en zy zouden propheteeren (…)". Á Brakel in Sara Nevius, *Godvruchtige overdenkingen en alleenspraken, betreffende het verborgen leven voor den Here* (Rotterdam: Gebr. Huge, n.d.), 3–4.

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the passage leading up to his comments on prophecy he made a special point of referring to male and female servants of God. He related that he was overjoyed to see that the Lord Jesus "has so many other male and female servants who are very passionate and Holy, so that [Jesus] can be much better served than by me alone."[94]

It is also noteworthy that Willem also supported women's evangelism in this book by structuring it as a discussion between four biblical characters including Priscilla, who taught early Christians alongside the Apostle Paul and her husband Aquila. Priscilla makes significant wise contributions to the conversation in the company of three men, who esteem her teachings, gives repeated instruction on humility, human frailty, sinfulness, relying on God's help, and denying our flesh.[95] Willem's inclusion of a smart, devout female teacher who plays an important role in his *Key to Devotion* suggests that he and other co-religionists valued Martha's and other women's contributions in spreading the Calvinist faith.

Although Cornelia's early death ended her brief period of evangelicalism, this tragedy was one of several personal circumstances that positioned her to be an ideal Protestant martyr. As religious warfare raged around her, she made it clear that she was she was willing to die for the Calvinist cause by writing and signing her confession. Her brief marriage made her an even more attractive model of Protestant piety due to the implicit rejection of the Catholic value of life-long celibacy. Susanna recounted that her contemporaries found her steadfast faith in light of the intense grief she suffered following her husband's death inspiring.[96] Following her husband in death only five weeks after his amplified her reputation for marital loyalty. Susanna and Willem provided contemporaries with written biographies of Cornelia that depict her as a Protestant pseudo-saint.

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94 "… ick moet my veel liever allesins over hen verblijden, wanneer ick sie/ ende spuere/ dat mijnen alderlieffsten Heere Iesus, noch soo veel andere dienaers/ ende dienaeressen heeft; daer van hy noch veel beter ghedient wort/ dan van my/ die soo vierich/ ende Heylich zijn;" Teellinck, *Sleutel der devotie*, 94.

95 Teellinck, *Sleutel der Devotie*, 108, 119, 124b–125a, et al. Dutch scholar of religion Op 't Hof convincingly argued that Aquila and Priscilla are stand-ins for Willem and his wife Martha Greendon. Moreover, Op 't Hof posited that Willem crafted some of Priscilla's teachings to repeat the English Puritan Lewis Bayly in order to emphasize her Puritan roots. Op t' Hof, "Martha Greendon …", 142.

96 "… haren onuytspreeckelijcken rouwe, ende droefheydt, den welcken sy nochtans alsoo wist te matighen, midts haren wille ghevanghen ghevende in den heylighen wille des Heeren, dat sy selfs haren lieven Man nu in sijn uytterste ligghende, met soo grooten cloeckmoedicheyt uyt den heyligen woorde Godts vertroostede, dat alle de omstaenders daer door grootelijcx verwondert, ende ghesticht zijn gheworden." Susanna's preface in Teellinck, 8.

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The tragedies that befell Cornelia combined with the influence of her wealthy family provided her with great prestige among Calvinists long after her death.

Although no other orthodox prophetic writings by women have been uncovered, there is evidence that Cornelia and other women performed important religious tasks in the Reformed communities in Zeeland during this early phase of Calvinist expansion between 1572 and 1625. Susanna's introduction to *A Short Confession of Faith* and Cornelia's writings describe the latter's religious activities. In addition, several dedications in books written by male proponents of the Further Reformation indicate that at least eight Teellinck women (including Cornelia and Susanna) made a variety of contributions to the Calvinist cause.

Cornelia instructed Calvinist sympathizers when teachers of the new faith were sorely needed between 1572 and 1577. According to the last article of Cornelia's confession, she believed Christ expected this and more from his elect:

> [He] wishes that we members of his church walk in a brotherly and Christian manner, help others in their need, … strengthen the weak, and love the fallen brothers, and admonish them according to the rules and institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ.[97]

Cornelia believed that all devout Calvinists should teach and help the needy. According to Susanna, Cornelia applied this advice to her own life:

> Her greatest, or rather only joy and desire was to speak of Godly affairs, to exalt God's omnipotence, his goodness, his wisdom, his prudence, and above all his heartfelt love for humanity, to exhaust herself in bringing people to God, and in educating them on the righteous path of sanctity.[98]

97 "Onse Heer … Jesus Christus … sijn uytvercoren Ghemeynte … willende dat wy oock/ als Lidtmaten sijner Ghemeynten/ broederlijck ende Christelijck wandelen/ den anderen behulpelijck zijn in der noot … den swacken versterckende/ ende den ghevallen broederen lieflijck/ ende Christelijck vermanende na den reghel ende instellinghe onses Heeren Jesu Christi …" Teellinck, 23–25.

98 "Haer meeste, jae eenighe vreuchde, ende ghenoechte was van Goddelijcke saken te spreecken, Godes almoghentheyt, goedheydt, wijsheydt, voorsighticheydt, ende boven al sijne hertelijcke liefde tot den menschelijken gheslachte, te verheffen, alle Menschen nae haer uytterste vermoghen tot Godt te trecken, ende in den rechten wegh der salicheydt te onderwijsen." Susanna's preface to Teellinck, 7.

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Susanna could have focused on Cornelia's capacity to teach through her written work as Adrian did in his poem: "She shall fundamentally instruct you from God's word, and teach you that you are corrupt and sinful." Moreover, she "… will enlighten you to truths that shall bring you joy …"[99] But instead Susanna described her sister's active ministry by emphasizing Cornelia's urge to "speak", "[bring] people to God", and "educate them." In so doing Susanna clarified that Cornelia did not only teach through her written works, but actively instructed believers and unbelievers in person as well.

In addition to her work preparing Cornelia's text for publication, Susanna also enacted Cornelia's advice to help the needy. In his book *Garden of Christian Prayer* (1635) their nephew Willem's dedicatory poem praised her longtime service in this role:

> Although you long to be with Christ, the sufferers whom you come to help in your city seek God to grant you a long life, because … you demonstrate an extraordinary holy compassion for all people disturbed, saddened, and needy … with comfort and understanding (that the Lord has richlybestowedonyou).[100]

Assisting the poor, the sick, foreigners, widows, and orphans was a task fulfilled by elders and deacons of the church and their wives. Considering her husband's service as an elder, their wealth, and their respected status, Susanna would have been expected to help her husband take care of needy people in their community of Zierikzee.[101] Based on Willem's commendation, Susanna was exemplary in this service role.

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99 "Een vroome Maaghd die sal u wijsen 't eenigh goed Waar in verheughen sal, end' rusten uw gemoed. Sy sal uyt Godes word u onderwijsen grondigh, Ende leeren dat ghy sijt elleendigh, ende sondigh … Leest dit, herleeststhet weer, ja schrijft het in uw herte. Soo word u ziele vry van sonden ende haar smerte. Godt, Hemel, Christus, Liefd, Gheloof, Hoop, Saligheyd. Besloten in dit kleyn, doch nuttigh Boecxken leyt." Hoffer in Teellinck, 12.

100 "…(boven alle het ghene wy nu geseyt hebben) sich noch sonderlinghe vertoont … in een heylighe *Medoogentheyt*, met alle benaude, bedroefde, ende behoeftige menschen; die ghy oock dien volgende, ghelijck in den voorighen loop uwe levens, so noch steets, met troost ende onderstant (naar de middelen, die de Heere u rijckelijck heft toe-gedient) also te hulpe comt in uwe stadt, dat de lendenen der ellendigen u alle wege seghenen, ende om u lang leven haren God aen-soecken, alhoewel ghy selve seer verlangt ontslegen te zijn, om met Christo te wesen …" Willem's dedication to Susanna Teellinck preceeding his *Lust-Hof der Christelijcker Gebeden* [*Garden of Christian Prayer*] (1635), A4 verso–A5 recto.

101 It is possible that Susanna may even have been recognized as a deaconess in her own right. However, for the most part, those officially deemed deaconesses were widows of

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4 Conclusions

Recognizing the fact that Cornelia and Susanna were early supporters of the Dutch Reformed Church during the violent struggle for its survival is necessary in order to understand the content of their writings. By authoring a Calvinist statement of faith and polemic poetry in the 1570s Cornelia declared herself a rebel. By preparing her sister's Calvinist confession and poetry for publication in 1607 and adding her own introduction, Susanna proclaimed her fervent support of Dutch independence. These may have been popular sentiments among many inhabitants of the Low Countries and they may have been couched in religious language, however during Cornelia and Susanna's lifetimes they were also impassioned, controversial statements made in the face of powerful political foes.

In different times and in different ways, Cornelia and Susanna engaged in political debate. Cornelia engaged with the political propaganda of the 1570s by circulating her political poetry in manuscript. Susanna intended the publication of her sister's works and a piece of her own to discourage her fellow Netherlanders from forging a diplomatic solution to the war with Spain by reiterating the atrocities of the 1570s and to fan the flames of war. Cornelia and Susanna's example also illuminates some of the concrete ways the Calvinist cause was intricately linked with the Revolt.[102] That Susanna dedicated this book to a group of young women planning to undergo the test of their faith required of prospective church members signals the fact that these young women were important to the movement. The fact that Cornelia and Susanna wanted to convert all people and ensure the unity of their new beliefs meant that they wanted to amass a unified force in opposition to their erstwhile Catholic king. That Cornelia was willing to translate biblical prophecy into current political promises also demonstrates the close link between religion and politics during this period of discord and warfare. But perhaps the most tangible example of this overlap is that Cornelia's willingness to sign her confession of faith was a brave political move that put her at risk of judicial persecution.

The Teellincks' experiences also reveal women's capacity to provide vital support to the Calvinist movement at its genesis. Within two generations in a

men who had served as deacons or elders and although this was true of her husband, they died in the same year. Geudeke, 67–86.

102 G. Groenhuis explains this connection between religion and politics in the Dutch Revolt: "… de vestiging van de kerk hand in hand ging met de verdrijving van het Spaanse Regime en de terugkeer van de uitgeweken bannelingen." Groenhuis, *De predikanten: de sociale positie van de gereformeerde predikanten in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden voor ±1700* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1977), 14.

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single family, there is evidence that at least eight women made active contributions to the spread of Dutch Calvinism as it spread across Zeeland after 1566.[103] Considering the poor survival rate of sixteenth-century handwritten materials and the unfortunate lack of documentary evidence for women's informal teaching and other religious activities, *A Short Confession of Faith* provides us with a rare glimpse into a period in which the Reformed communities in Zierikzee and Middelburg were supportive not only of women's church-building activities, but also of women's engagement in political debate. During this period of religious upheaval and sporadic warfare between the Netherlands and Spain contemporaries valued women's efforts to educate their neighbors and families and spread Calvinist orthodoxy among believers and unbelievers.

103 Johannes de Swaef (1594–1653), a school teacher in Middelburg in charge of catechizing the Reformed youth, well-known for his poetry and support of the Further Reformation, dedicated his 1622 translation of Paul Baynes' *Brief Directions Unto a Godly life* to Johanna and Agatha, (sisters of Willem and Eewoud Teellinck), and to their nieces Magdalena (1592–?), Martha (1597–1624), and Maria Stavenisse (1600–1633) (daughters of Levina Teellinck (1571–1619) and Adriaen Stavenisse (1561–1616)). His dedication to these Teellinck women underscores these women's role in their children's religious instruction by advising that it is parents' duty to "teach their children religious beliefs in a set order" as a household catechism and to answer their children's religious inquiries.

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CHAPTER 3

The Maid of Holland and Her Heroic Heiresses

Martha Moffitt Peacock

The Maid of Holland, or *Hollandia* as she was called, was employed in a variety of visual formats and types during the Golden Age. These varied allegorical renderings aided in the signification of diverse meanings circulating around the cult figure. She embodied religious, political, and – particularly important for the purposes of this article – gendered discourses. Her popular representation began to flourish at the time of the Revolt, as she came to symbolize the struggle for liberty against Spanish oppression.[1] While much has been asserted about her religious origins and her patriotic symbolism, there have been no attempts at theorizing her meaning for the female spectatrix specifically. I would argue that this gender-crossing archetype had the ability to shape cultural opinions regarding the female sex that would be enabling for women in this society. Instead of constantly imaging women within the traditional structures of the male gaze, Dutch artists of the seventeenth century – inspired by this masculine archetype – began to visually explore the active, strong, and skillful characteristics of women. In addition, it will be asserted that the representation of such powerful women had a long-lasting legacy, influencing the formulation of gender status and roles for women from the beginnings of the Revolt in the later half of the sixteenth century and continuing throughout

1 The Maid of Holland and the Dutch Garden are analyzed in W. A. Beelaerts van Blokland, "De oorsprong van den Hollandschen tuin," *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 47 (1929): 3–12, 57–59, 115–18, 322–26; P. J. van Winter, "De Hollandse tuin," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 8 (1957): 29–121; Carol Louise Janson, "The birth of Dutch liberty: origins of the pictorial imagery," (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1982), 108–19; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 69–71; Arie Jan Gelderblom, *Mannen en maagden in Hollands tuin. Interpretatieve studies van Nederlandse letterkunde 1575–1781* (Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers, 1991); Catherine Levesque, *Journey through landscape in seventeenth-century Holland: The Haarlem print series and Dutch identity* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Helmut Georg Koenigsberger, "Republicanism, monarchism and liberty," in *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of Ragnhild Hatton*, eds. Robert Oresko, G. C. Gibbs, and H. M. Scott (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 43–74; Alastair Duke, Judith Pollmann, and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), vii; Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation Made Real: Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 33.

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the seventeenth century and even beyond.[2] This analysis of a rather unique visual tradition provides important insight into how such images helped to shape the societal conditions that promoted greater independence and agency for Dutch women generally.

In doing so this article will contest much previous scholarship that has focused on the patriarchal character of Dutch art and will provide ample evidence of an alternative view of women that was influenced by this powerful allegorical figure. From this perspective, women were imagined as heroic and consequential contributors within a dynamically changing society. The intent of this article is thus to develop a discourse on Dutch art that addresses women spectators and their emulation of the gender-crossing Maid of Holland allegory.

The Low Countries's rebellion against Spain will be the starting point for this analysis, as this was a crucial moment for the overthrow of old socio-cultural traditions and the introduction of new ones.[3] Importantly, this revolutionary moment of political reform also provided occasions for the restructuring of gender roles that assigned women greater significance in the public realm as traditional boundaries were blurred, altered, and even breached. Early on, women seized opportunities afforded by these shifting cultural terrains to rigorously participate in the Revolt and subsequently in the newly constituted socio-cultural framework. Consequently, each succeeding generation of

2 The dates of the Dutch Golden Age are frequently debated amongst scholars. Economic historians Jan de Vries and A. M. van der Woude argue that the model for the Golden Age economy was already being established in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. They assert that this basic model remained in place until 1817 in *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Maarten Prak initiates his study of the Golden Age with the discontent and outbreak of revolt mid-sixteenth century and claims that it had ended by 1715 in *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5. Peter Sutton dates the Golden Age from the beginnings of the Revolt in 1568 to the Rampjaar and the invasion of Louis XIV's troops in 1672 in *Vermeer and the Delft Style* (Tokyo: Hata Stichting Foundation with Random House Kodansha, 2008), 13. In Frans Grijzenhout and Henk van Veen, eds., *The Golden Age of Dutch Painting in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5 the parameters of the Golden Age are set between 1580 and 1680. Jonathan Israel considers the different phases of the Repulic's history to be 1. The Making of the Republic, 1477–1588, 2. The Early Golden Age, 1588–1647, 3. The Later Golden Age, 1647–1702, and 4. The Age of Decline, 1702–1806 in *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

3 The unique and original character of the Dutch Republic has been under constant discussion from the seventeenth century until the present. It is the particular subject of a collection of essays edited by Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen, *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

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women built upon these power-engendering traditions to structure their own significant identity. Indeed, historical studies regarding women of the Dutch Golden Age have increasingly provided evidence that they enjoyed a relatively powerful position. By first grounding this article in these investigations of social practice, I aim to preclude the all-too-frequent art historical tendency to neglect women's actual lived experience. The societal features that reveal relatively significant levels of power for women in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic include: high education and literacy levels; public praise and recognition of capable, intelligent, and skilled women; and large numbers of female participants in business and other activities in the public domain.[4] These conditions in combination with the tremendous cultural attention being paid to contemporary women in texts and images reveal a society in which women had enhanced opportunities to participate in the shaping of positive definitions of women and their contributions in both the public and private spheres.

4 Research indicates that Dutch women enjoyed relatively high literacy rates and were able to engage in the public sphere during the seventeenth century, see Margaret Spufford, "Literacy, trade and religion in the commercial centres of Europe," in *A Miracle Mirrored: the Dutch Republic in European Perspective*, eds. Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 229–83 and note 350; and Erika Kuijpers, "Lezen en schrijven. Onderzoek naar het alfabetiseringsniveau in zeventiende eeuws Amsterdam," *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 23 (1997): 490–522, 507. Also, several studies have been conducted on the enhanced social and legal status of Dutch women and of their participation in trade. In part, this has been related to the greater degree of equality between spouses in Dutch marriages. For a discussion of women's rights and equality in marriage in the Republic see John Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective," in *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography*, eds. David Victor Glass and David Edward Charles (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1965), 101–41; Alice Clare Carter, "Marriage Counseling in the Early Seventeenth Century: England and the Netherlands Compared," in *Ten Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations*, ed. Jan A. van Dorsten (Leiden; London: Published for the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, at the University Press; Oxford University Press, 1974), 94–127; Donald Haks, *Huwelijk en Gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1982), 141–57; Schama, *Embarrassment*, 384–91; Ariadne Schmidt, "Vrouwen en het recht. De juridische status van vrouwen in Holland in de vroegmoderne tijd," *Jaarboek Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie* 58 (2004): 26–44; Manon van der Heijden, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, and Ariadne Schmidt, "Terugkeer van het patriarchaat? Vrije vrouwen in de Republiek," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 6 (2009): 26–52; Ariadne Schmidt, "Gelijk hebben, gelijk Krijgen? Vrouwen en vertrouwen in het recht in Holland in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw," in *Het Gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw. Recht, onrecht en reputatie in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, eds. Michiel van Groesen, Judith Pollmann, and Hans Cools (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014), 109–25; Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective, volume 1, 1650: Hard-Won Unity*, trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz (Basingstoke; Assen: Palgrave Macmillan; Van Gorcum, 2004), 194. For specific discussions of Dutch women and trade see Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands, c. 1580–1815* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007).

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In spite of the tremendous amount of research suggesting that early modern Dutch women possessed an unusually expansive ability to act within and shape their culture, little has been done to relate this power and independence to the art of the era. There are still questions to be asked about how the imaging of consequential women influenced public perceptions of the female gender. In response to these issues, discussions of imagining, subverting, emulating, empathizing, and assimilating via images will build upon social histories to provide a clearer understanding of female identity in the Republic. This realization that women were not absent in cultural practice and in influencing representations of their gender is crucial to the central thesis of this article. Influenced as they were by the Maid of Holland archetype, women significantly contributed to an empathetic attitude towards their gender with the images of female power that they inspired, created, and consumed.

Before attempting to argue for the emulating experiences of Dutch women as they viewed Maid of Holland imagery, it should be noted that during the last decade, evidence of women's impact on early modern cultural development has increasingly been brought forward. This shift has encouraged a greater interest in analyzing female activity than in indicting patriarchy, and it has opened intriguing new possibilities for theorizing about women's lives and about their contributions to culture. Furthermore, scholars have begun to more carefully investigate the limits of patriarchy and the options available to women by leaving behind discussions of oppression and instead concentrating on female agency.[5] Such an approach has been characterized as "relational autonomy" by some feminist philosophers, and it argues for individual agency while at the same time acknowledging the import of social determinants. It has been suggested that a woman's autonomous ability to "imagine herself otherwise" in a male-dominated society is only possible when the "cultural imaginary" contains symbols, images, and representations that allow her to deliberate, self-define, and self-fashion without unassailable restrictions.[6] It

5 Allyson M. Poska discusses this scholarship in "Upending Patriachry: Rethinking Marriage and Family in Early Modern Europe," *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman, and Katherine A. McIver (Farnham Eng. and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 195–211. Jutta Gisela Sperling's chapter in the same volume similarly reviews recent scholarship on women's agency in marriage – see "The Economics and Politics of Marriage," 213–32. She particularly points out that contrary to the situation in Italy and France, women in the Netherlands and other parts of northern Europe enjoyed greater agency in regards to property and other marriage rights, 221.

6 Catriona Mackenzie, "Imagining Oneself Otherwise," *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, eds. Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 124–150. The introduction to this text generally discusses the various critiques of autonomy.

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will be demonstrated that the Maid of Holland was certainly one of those empowering symbols. Hence, the crucial redefining of women that resulted from the representation of various heroic, scholarly, artistic, and skilled maids of Holland, meant that the Dutch spectatrix had the freedom to at times subvert patriarchal prescriptions for sex-typed behaviors and to instead emulate the behaviors of the powerful female role models that were so well imprinted in the Dutch psyche.[7]

1 The Revolt and the Maid's Metamorphosis

As previously mentioned, the Maid of Holland became a particularly popular symbol during the rebellion against Philip II. It was amidst this Revolt that the Maid of Holland became a fashionable allegory representing Dutch independence and virtue. Although the tradition of allegorical city maidens had a long history throughout Europe, *Hollandia* began to metamorphose into a nationalistic symbol of the new federation generally. In several early images, the Maid is depicted with coats of arms in a wattle-fenced garden enclosure reminiscent of traditional representations of the Virgin Mary. Just as the unbreachable garden, or *hortus conclusus*, had symbolized the preservation of Mary's virginity, the *Hollandse Tuin* (Dutch Garden) came to signify the defense of Dutch territories and wealth against envious foreigners. This biblical allusion and the frequent inclusion of a martyr's palm of triumph signify divine sanction of the rebellion. Hence, early in the rise of the Republic both sacred and political allusions were propounded via this allegorical figure, as in a stained-glass window gift of 1595–1597 from the city of Dordrecht to the Sint Janskerk in Gouda by Gerrit Gerritsz. Cuyp (1555/1575–1644) after an anonymous artist (Fig. 3.1).

It was fitting during the revolutionary era that this type of Maid of Holland should evolve as subject matter for a replacement window in the Sint Janskerk. In 1552, much of the church had been destroyed by fire and afterwards a restoration project was undertaken to rebuild the church and replace the destroyed windows. The windows in the apse and transept areas were completed according to Catholic dogma, but when Protestants took over the church in 1573, the iconographical program was changed. Several of the new nave windows, such as the Maid of Holland, took on a much more political character and were

7 Patricia H. Miller's discussions of social learning theory in regards to gender development are important for understanding the significance of social interaction for the development of gender roles, see *Theories of Developmental Psychology* (San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman, 1983), 179–245.

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FIGURE 3.1 Gerrit Gerritsz. Cuyp after an Anon. artist, *Maid of Holland*, detail 1595–1597, Gouda, Sint Janskerk

funded by the cities of the new Republic.[8] Nevertheless, the use of stained glass with this monumental female figure still recalls traditional depictions of the Virgin in this medium. Moreover, in later scenes of the Dutch Maid a Bible was added, which further indicates how Protestant veneration of the Maid and what she symbolized replaced, in certain ways, the worship of Mary in the old religion. And like Mary, *Hollandia* also became an important female role model.

In this window, the Maid is shown in contemporary dress prominently displaying the arms of Dordrecht, as it was the first meeting place of the rebels in

8 For a thorough discussion of the Gouda windows see Henny van Harten-Boers, Xander van Eck, Zsuzsanna van Ruyven-Zeman, Christiane E. Coebergh-Surie, H. Janse, and Andrea C. Gasten, eds., *The Stained-Glass Windows in the Sint-Janskerk at Gouda, 1556–1604*, 3 volumes (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1997–2002).

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FIGURE 3.2 Gillis Huppe, *Maid of Dordrecht*, 1618, Groothoofdspoort, Dordrecht

1572. In Dordrecht such imagery was already familiar, as the Maid of that city appeared conspicuously in relief sculpture on the Groothoofdspoort. This figure appears to have been an important early influence on Dutch Maid allegories; she is mentioned by Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella (c. 1526–1593), a courtier to Philip II, in his memoirs of their journey to Dordrecht in 1549.[9] In 1618 this earlier sculpture was restored by Gillis Huppe (1576–1650) (Fig. 3.2). The relief depicts a classically draped Maid in a fenced garden and wearing a hat, an ancient signifier of freedom dating from Roman times indicating the liberation of slaves. She carries a triumphant palm and the Dordrecht coat of arms, surrounded by the shields of other Dutch cities. In similar fashion, the Maid in the Sint Janskerk is also ringed in the arms of other rebel cities, and in this manner the Maid of Dordrecht also becomes the Maid of the Union. In addition, she is framed by the allegorical virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude. Other symbols include the palm, the arch, and the wreath as signifiers of triumph for this female symbol of the Republic who is peacefully, yet powerfully, ensconced in her garden.[10]

9 Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella, *El felicísimo viaje del muy alto y muy poderoso príncipe Don Felipe* (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1552), 276–77.

10 Van Ruyven-Zeman goes into great detail discussing the symbolism of, and scholarship on, this window. Unlike previous historians, she prefers to view this as primarily a Maid of

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FIGURE 3.3 "Maid of Holland" coin, 1573

By this date, the Maid in her Dutch Garden was already an important signifier for the prosperity of the Republic and the need to protect Dutch riches from envious outside forces. The embedding of this allegory in the social imaginary was significantly assisted by her early appearance on coinage. From the late sixteenth century onward she had appeared on coins enclosed in her garden and wearing the hat of liberty (Fig. 3.3). While her protected status is indicated by the barricaded enclosure in this ubiquitous imagery, her temerity and bellicosity are also emphasized by her brandished sword. Consonant with these traditions, the Sint Janskerk Maid bears the attribute of preserved virtue like the Virgin, but she also carries apotropaic signifiers for the Dutch hope of victory in the ongoing struggle with the Spanish enemy. And in her church setting, the Maid assimilates the protective power that Mary exercised in behalf of those who worshiped her. In this manner, *Hollandia* shifts from a (Dordrecht) civic allegory rooted in a sacred Christian archetype to an important signifier of the newly liberated Republic at this important moment of unification.

Dordrecht, and she argues that the enclosure does not represent the "Garden of Holland." Rather she interprets this as a view of Dordrecht as a unique and foundational city within Holland. Nevertheless, because this window was a gift to Gouda and the arms of other cities are included, it seems reasonable that Dordrecht also intended this allegorical representation as a symbol for the Republic generally. Furthermore, it is important to consider that the Maid in her Dutch Garden was already being represented on coinage by this date, and was thus already a familiar metaphor for the Republic. See *The Stained-Glass Windows in the Sint-Janskerk at Gouda*, 3:202–03.

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Perhaps of even greater relevance for future depictions of the Dutch Maid was another visual type in which she wears the helmet and armor of Pallas Minerva, the goddess of war and wisdom. At times she also grasps a lance capped by the Hat of Liberty. In this Roman mode she also complies with Cesare Ripa's description of the allegorical figure, Liberty.[11] Such a portrayal added classical authority to Christian sanction in the Dutch struggle for independence. This militaristic Maid of Holland is represented in a window gifted by the States of Holland (also situated in the nave of Gouda's Sint Janskerk) by Adriaan Gerritsz. de Vrije (died in 1643) after a design by Joachim Wtewael (1566–1638) (Fig. 3.4). In this scene, a woman in classical warrior garb is identified by the inscription "Protection from Tyranny."[12] She carries a sword and a shield that bears the face of a lion, which would become the favorite companion to the Maid in future representations as an additional symbol of the Republic. Moreover, this bellicose Maid of Holland would be viewed as a protectress from despotism in visual culture for decades to come. She rides her chariot over the crowned figure of tyranny, who is surrounded by various instruments of subjection including the sword, halberd, whip, and shackles. Seated next to her on the chariot is a nude female allegory representing Freedom of Conscience. Hence, the warrior Maid protects this liberty from tyranny. Pulling the chariot are depictions of other virtues including Fortitude, Charity, Justice, Fidelity, and Unity. As with the enclosed Maid in the previously discussed window, this figure is framed by a triumphal arch and several Dutch coats of arms. Thus, in this guise, the Maid merges with the figure of Minerva and further adopts protective functions for the Republic through an assimilation of militaristic attributes inherited from her ancient predecessor.

During the last decades of the seventeenth century, it was this classically-garbed and helmeted Minervan Maid that was employed in Dutch coins (Fig. 3.5).[13] Nevertheless, religious overtones are also present with the Bible

11 Cesare Ripa, *Noua iconologia di Cesare Ripa perugino, caualier de SS. Mauritio & Lazzaro*, first published in 1593 and first published illustrated edition in 1603 (Padua: Per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, nella stampa del Pasquati, 1618), 311–12.

12 Van Ruyven-Zeman discusses the previous misinterpretation of this figure, but identifies her via the drawing for the window. She does not identify her as a Maid of Holland but simply as "Protection from Tyranny." See *The Stained-Glass Windows in the Sint-Janskerk at Gouda*, 3:192–94.

13 While Henri van de Waal argues that the figure on Dutch coins represents the Maid of Holland, P. J. Vermeulen argues that she represents Minerva. However, Vermeulen neglects an analysis of previous imagery that clearly indicates how these two figures had become conjoined early on in the Republic. See Henri van de Waal, *Drie Eeuwen Vaderlandsche Geschied-Uitbeelding, 1500–1800, Een Iconologische Studie*, 2 volumes (Martinus Nijhoff:

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FIGURE 3.4 Adriaan Gerritsz. de Vrije after Joachim Wtewael, *Freedom of Conscience*, detail, 1596, Gouda, Sint Janskerk

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FIGURE 3.5 "Maid of Holland" coin, 1681

propping up the figure's left elbow. It was this hybrid religious and political Maid of Holland that was employed during the seventeenth century in order to create a powerful cultural symbol for the new Republic. And it has become clear that such symbols and memories of the Revolt helped construct much of Dutch identity.[14] Furthermore, it is obvious that this cultural memory figure permeated all levels of society via a variety of media for a diversity of purposes. Through such representations, she was also linked to civic patriotism; cities such as Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Alkmaar all used the Maid as their symbol.

The Hague, 1952), 1:208–09; P. J. Vermeulen, "Over de Hollandsche Maagd en den Bijbel op onze oude munt," *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht* 21 (1865): 166–71.

14 The importance of political memory for the Republic is thoroughly discussed in several essays in Erika Kuijpers, Judith Pollmann, Johannes Müller, and Jasper van der Steen, eds., *Memory Before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), including Jasper van der Steen, "A Contested Past. Memory Wars during the Twelve Years Truce (1609–21)," 45–62; Marianne Eekhout, "Celebrating a Trojan Horse. Memories of the Dutch Revolt in Breda (1590–1650)," 129–48; and Erika Kuijpers, "Between Storytelling and Patriotic Scripture. The Memory Brokers of the Dutch Revolt," 183–202. Also, see Hugh Dunthorne, "Dramatizing the Dutch Revolt, Romantic History and its Sixteenth-Century Antecedents," in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke*, eds. Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 11–31.

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In addition, she was used to promote nationalistic agendas on the part of the House of Orange, as will soon be discussed.

2 Contemporary Minervas

In certain instances, the hybridized *Hollandia* became increasingly bellicose in the early seventeenth century while the Dutch were still at war. In this constant militaristic reimaging during the Golden Age, the Maid also began to merge in form with equally popular depictions of actual, famed heroines in the Dutch struggle for independence. In particular, images of the Maid and of Kenau Simonsdr. Hasselaer (1526–1588) adopted similar traits as they both benefited from each other's ubiquitous display.

By the mid-seventeenth century Kenau had become one of the most celebrated Dutch heroes in art and text, thus revealing her importance for the collective memory of the Revolt.[15] Successive histories began to greatly exaggerate her military feats during the siege of Haarlem from 1572–1573. These accounts created a sensationalized and mythologized cultural memory,

15 There are several sources on Kenau's life and her representation in art including: Jacques François Bosdijk (published under the pseudonym J. van de Capelle), *Belangrijke stukken voor geschieden oudheidkunde: zijnde bijlagen en aanteekeningen betrekkelijk het beleg en de verdediging van Haarlem in 1572–73* (Schoonhoven: Van Nooten, 1844); Cornelius Ekama, *Beleg en verdediging van Haarlem in 1572 en 1573* (Haarlem: Kruseman, 1872); Gerda Hendrika Kurtz, *Kenu Symonsdochter van Haerlem* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956). For recent studies on Kenau see Henk Overduin, A. A. M. de Jong, and Els Vogel, *Kenau: beeld en werkelijkheid*, (Haarlem: Vereniging "Haerlem", 1973); Michiel Thierry de Bye Dólleman, *Kenau Simonsdochter Hasselaer: Haar voorouders en naaste familieleden* (Haarlem, 1973); Schama, *Embarrassment*, 88–89; Joke Spaans, "Toverij in Haarlem," *Haerlem Jaarboek* (1986): 8–35; Marijke Meijer Drees, "Vaderlandse heldinnen in belegeringstoneelstukken," *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 85(1) (1992): 71–82; Marijke Meijer Drees, "Kenau. De paradox van een strijdbare vrouw," in *Waar de blanke top der duinen en andere vaderlandse herinneringen*, ed. N. C. F. van Sas (Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Contact, 1995), 42–56; Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Proverbial Reframing – Rebuking and Revering Women in Trousers," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (1999): 13–34; W. G. M. Cerutti, *Het stadhuis van Haarlem. Hart van de stad* (Haarlem: Gottmer/Schuyt, 2001), 431–32; Els Kloek, *Kenau: de heldhaftige zakenvrouw uit Haarlem* (*1526–1588*) (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001); Daniel R. Horst *De opstand in zwart-wit: Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand* (*1566–1584*) (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003), 146–50; Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Out of the Kitchen and into the Fire: The Dutch Heroine Tradition," in *War and Peace: Critical issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, eds. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2011), 557–98; Els Kloek, *Kenau & Magdalena: Vrouwen in de Tachtigjarige Oorlog* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014).

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yet the tales were also based on a real woman of Haarlem.[16] Kenau was most typically depicted in a confident hand-on-hip pose, as in a print by Matthias Quad von Kinkelbach (1557–1613) (Fig. 3.6).[17] She holds a standing pike, while other male-gendered weapons such as sword, pistol, and powder horn hang from her waist. She also sports a medal of honor and sash across her chest that serve to enhance her heroic pose. Silhouetted against the sky and identified as "Capitain Kenou," she becomes a triumphant, manly warrior. The inscriptions in German and Latin were obviously meant for an international audience; they reveal a great deal about the perceived character of the masculine Kenau and her growing international reputation. The text praises her legendary military feats by stating that she, armed as a man, drove the Spaniards from Haarlem in defense of the Fatherland. Furthermore, her army is compared to the Amazons and she is proclaimed a heroine whose fame is known far and wide.

This print evidences a desire to spread the legitimacy of the powerful, new Republic throughout Europe. It is one of those founding discourses that would form part of the cultural memory of the war for independence. It gave authority to Dutch claims that the war was fought in order to defend their rights and their Fatherland. But even more importantly for this discussion, the print provided a prototype of mingled male and female characteristics that would be greatly influential for future depictions and characterizations of the Maid of Holland. The warrior accessories, the manly pose with one arm akimbo, and the grasping of the pike were all elements that would influence *Hollandian* coinage and other media throughout the Golden Era. Significantly, both female archetypes – one an actual historical character and one an allegorical figure – celebrated women taking on masculine attributes and subverting traditional patriarchal notions of the female sex.

The militaristic character of the Maid of Holland was co-evolving with another type of repeated Kenau image, in which she is represented in half-length with all her weapons and the Haarlem church and landscape in the distance (Fig. 3.7). Although a likely sixteenth-century original has disappeared, there are several copies still in existence.[18] Bok's research regarding these copies sug-

16 For an overview of these diaries, see Kurtz, *Kenu*, 13–23.

17 The dating of the Kenau images is difficult because they frequently bear the date 1573, the time of Kenau's heroic deeds. Quad's image, however, appears to be one of the earliest. It probably dates to the last few decades of the sixteenth century since the inscription states that she is now an old woman. A similar anonymous print with German verses in the British library appears to be copied after this print, see Kloek, *Kenau & Magdalena*, 204.

18 Most versions of this painting are in private collections, but one is found in the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem. The dating of these works is difficult, but it is certain that they were painted in the seventeenth century.

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CAPITAI N KĒNOV.
DIESE KENNOW IANSEN EIN
Hæc Batana est Kénow
quam armat sic mascula virtus,
Hæc Mauros hybridas Harle
mi exercet & vroet.
Civis est Harlemia et vidua
Es ist bekant gar weit vnd breitt,
Der Amazoner Weiber streitt
Das seie ir leib, vn ieben wagen,
Vnd iren feind gar veriagen.
Also ist auch zu vnser zeit
Vernommen im hollandschen streit
Ein menlich hertz, sin, vnd gemut,
So dem Spanischen zeug vil schadens thut
Vnder den weibern, in Hollandt,
Die iren namen machen bekant.
Mit beschirmung ires Vatterlands,
Damitt es mit so gar vnd gantz
Von den Spansen Moren werd verdorben,
Drüb sich ein Weib, KENNOV, erworben,
Gar woll gemut, vnd seher behendt
Von den weibern furt das regiment.
Anno Dñi M. D. L XXIII.
MQ

FIGURE 3.6 Matthias Quad von Kinkelbach, *Kenau Simonsdr. Hasselaer*, 1573, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

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FIGURE 3.7 Anon., *Kenau Simonsdr Hasselaer*, c. 1590–1609, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

gests that they were probably commissioned and owned by family members who took pride in their famous and heroic ancestress.[19] In the Rijksmuseum's painting, Kenau is situated in front of a dramatic, triumphal arch that recalls

19 Marten Jan Bok, "Heldhaftige vrouwen," *Kunstschrift* 2 (1991): 7–8. The importance of memory associated with family in enhancing one's status is also discussed in Kuijpers, "Between Storytelling and Patriotic Scripture, 183–202.

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the *Hollandia* imagery already discussed. Her bellicosity is underscored by the included halberd, pike, pistol, powder horn, and sword and by the inscription:

> See here a Woman called Kenou, Brave as a Man:
> Who in that time, Gallantly fought the Spanish tyrant.[20]

Such confrontational images demonstrate to what extent the legendary Kenau had overcome traditional female stereotypes. She is represented as a contemporary woman in her forties without idealization. Her unlovely and mannish features underscore the intent of the inscription that equates her with men. The exaggerated weaponry also emphasizes her masculine capabilities and poses a direct challenge to traditional displays of male power and authority. But perhaps most importantly for this discussion, the images also culturally liberate Kenau and the comparable *Hollandia*; they thwart the visual tradition of the lovely female painted as an object for a licentious male gaze.

Equally illuminating are the prints that compare Kenau to Judith, the biblical heroine, whose beheading of the tyrant Holofernes saved her people. These glorifying images, beginning in the late sixteenth century, are some of the first historiated portraits of the new Republic in which a contemporary figure is shown in the guise of a heroic figure from the past. This type of connection parallels the male tradition of William of Orange being identified with the Old Testament David or Moses and, more generally, the manner in which the Dutch associated themselves with God's chosen people of ancient Israel.[21] Hence, this comparison truly elevates Kenau to the status of an historical "good woman" of the type that was frequently listed in catalogs of the early modern

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20 *Siet hier een Vrou,/ genaemt Kenou,/ Vroom als een Man:/ Dief alder-tijt,/ Vromelijck bestrijt/ Den Spaenschen Tiran.*

21 Several historians have discussed the parallels drawn between the Dutch and the ancient Israelites in the seventeenth century, including: Hendrik Smitskamp, *Calvinistisch nationaal besef in Nederland vóór het midden der 17de eeuw* (The Hague: D. A. Daamen, 1947), 13–19; Gerrit Groenhuis, *De Predikanten. De sociale positie van de gereformeerde predikanten in de Verenigde Nederlanden voor +/- 1700* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1977), 77–107; C. Huisman, *Neerlands Israël. Het natiebesef der traditioneel-gereformeerden in de achtiende eeuw* (Dordrecht: J. P. van den Tol, 1983); Schama, *Embarrassment*, 93–125; G. J. Schutte, *Het Calvinistisch Nederland* (Utrecht: Bijleveld, 1988); Paul Regan, "Calvinism and the Dutch Israel Thesis," in *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe Volume 2, The Later Reformation*, ed. Bruce Gordon (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 91–106. Such biblical typing had already been employed for previous women rulers in the Netherlands, in which Margaret of York, for example, was depicted as Mary Magdalene in order to convey her similarly righteous traits, see Andrea Pearson, "Gendered Subject, Gendered Spectator: Mary Magdalen in the Gaze of Margaret of York," *Gesta* 44(1) (2006): 45–64.

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age.[22] Consequently, in one of several anonymous prints, Kenau is identified as the virtuous "Dutch Judith" who overcame the Spanish tyrant (Fig. 3.8).[23] The helmeted head of a Spaniard sits as a trophy on the table next to an armed Kenau who also wears a medal around her neck. Therefore, just as *Hollandia* was celebrated for her Marian apotropaic powers, Kenau was venerated as a biblical protectress of the Dutch people.

Other heroines of the Revolt, Trijn van Leemput (c. 1530–1607) of Utrecht and Trijn Rembrands (c. 1557–1638) of Alkmaar, were similarly represented in manly warrior guise, and they too were included in local and national histories and catalogs.[24] As a result of such bravery, several of these heroines were frequently included in histories of the Revolt and in contemporary Dutch catalogs of good women, such as the text *Van de Wtnementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts* (*On the Excellence of the Female Sex*, 1639 and 1642) by Johan van Beverwijck (1594–1647).[25] With such cultural adulation, it should not be surprising that contemporary historians record how several Dutch women were discovered disguising themselves as men in order to go to battle during the Golden Age.[26]

These early Dutch heroines were distinctive in many ways. First, several cities of the newly forming Republic took pride in and proclaimed in exaggerated fashion the brave deeds of one or more of their female citizenry in paintings,

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22 For an overview of these catalogs and their contents, see Glenda McLeod, *Virtue and Venom: Catalogs of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991). The following individuals also discuss these catalogs and female luminaries: Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 182–83; Hilda L. Smith, *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 7; Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

23 *OMINE FOLICI DVX KENNAV HOLLANDICA Iudith Harlemo Excurens sauuos sic pulsat Iberos Sie da eijn frauv genamt kennau fris wie eijn lanskucht gut Si brauckt sich im harlem aen storm und slacht wol gemut*.

24 For images of these heroines and further discussion, see Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Out of the Kitchen," 557–98. Also see, http://centraalmuseum.nl/ontdekken/object/?img_only=1#0:840; and http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/TrijnRembrands.

25 Johan van Beverwijck, *Van de Wtnementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts. Verçiert met Historyen, ende kopere Platen; als oock Latijnsche, ende Nederlansche Verssen van Mr. Corn. Boy*, 3 volumes (Dordrecht: Hendrick van Esch, 1643).

26 Van Beverwijck, *Wtnementheyt*, 2:358 and 3:51. Petrus de Lange, *Batavise Romeyn; ofte alle de voornaemste heldendaden, ridderlijke feyten en listige oorlogs-vonden, in veld en zeeslagen, overwinninge van steden en schepen, en in andere gelegentheden, by de Hollanders en Zeeuwen verricht, zedert den iare 1492 tot 1661* (Amsterdam: Willem van Beaumont, 1661), 103, 174–75.

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ÆTA. 46
1573
OMINE FOELICI DVX, KENNAV HOLLANDICA IVDITH
HARLEMO EXCVRRENS SÆVOS SIC PVLSAT IBEROS.
SIET HIER EEN VROV. GHENAEMPT KENNĀV. VROOM ALS EE MĀ
DIE TALDERTIIT VROMELIC BESTRIT. DEN SPAENSCHEN TIIRAN

FIGURE 3.8 Anon., *Kenau Simonsdr. Hasselaer*, 1573, Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam

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prints, and city histories.[27] So, rather than producing a singularly extraordinary heroine, the Revolt generated a tradition that allowed for the much more common assimilation of heroic capabilities by women. Another unusual feature of the Dutch heroine tradition is the manner in which these women achieved their legendary status. Unlike the more familiar self-sacrificing heroines of the past, most of these women gained fame through courageous struggle in battle. Indeed, they purportedly competed with, and at times surpassed, their male compatriots in terms of strength and bravery. Thus, the future ability of women to envision themselves in traditionally male roles was greatly enhanced. Finally, a further distinctive feature of these heroines was their common status; they were not royalty, but were instead ordinary burgher women. Assuredly, this aspect of the Dutch heroine also made her a more accessible role model for women at large.[28]

Some Dutch authors like Jacob van de Vivere and Simon de Vries asserted that this celebration of courageous heroines inspired later generations of women to go to war, become aggressive, rule their husbands, and take on male roles.[29] Such anecdotes relate directly to the research of Dekker and Van de Pol, whose investigations yielded a significant number of cases in which women dressed as males and enlisted as sailors and soldiers during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the Netherlands.[30] Furthermore, they presume that the number of instances discovered only represents a small portion of actual cases in which women were donning the trousers. While the motivations of

27 Frijhoff and Spies discuss the significance of city identity via symbols and rituals in *Dutch Culture*, chapter 3.

28 There are examples of women engaging in warfare elsewhere in Early Modern Europe, however, women elsewhere did not become lauded heroines with lasting, cultural renown. Furthermore, their participation did not have an enduring effect in terms of patriotic memorializing or a breaching of future gender norms. See, for example, Bernadette Whelan, "'The weaker vessel'?: The Impact of Warfare on Women in Seventeenth-Century Ireland" in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women. 4, Victims or Viragos?* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Four Courts, 2005), 120–42.

29 Jacobus Viverius, (published under the pseudonym Philologus Philiatros a Ganda), *De wintersche avonden of Nederlantsche vertellingen* (Utrecht: Lambert Roeck, 1650), 463–64. Simon de Vries, *D'Eedelste Tijdkortingh der Weet-geerige Verstanden of de Groote Historische Rariteit-Kamer. Der sonderlinghste Natuerlijcke en Boven-natuerlijcke Saecken, Geschiedenissen en Voorvallen van allerley slagh: Te gelijck voorsien met vrolijcke Gemoeds-verlustigingen. Voorgestelt by manier van ondersoeckende Redenvoeringen tusschen Adel-Aert, Lees-Aert, Vroom-Aert, Vrolyck-Aert, Roem-Aert, Vreedegond en Rosemond*, 1 (Amsterdam: Jan Bouman, 1682–1684), 119–27.

30 Rudolf M. Dekker and Lotte C. van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Judy Marcure and Lotte C. van de Pol (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

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these women were mixed, many of them claimed patriotic justifications and expressed a desire for glory. Surely, the conflicting opinions regarding female soldiers, particularly those extolling the patriotic foremothers of the Revolt, must have inspired several women to take on these male roles, as is described in various narratives. In addition, the ubiquitous *Hollandia* also provided a constant visual model of female strength and heroism. Consequently, the Dutch were influenced within this social framework to have esteemed perceptions of women's bravery and of their capabilities generally. Most importantly, there developed a shared cultural memory of women who were celebrated because they had transgressed traditional gender boundaries and were found to be the equal of men.

It seems likely that the visual coupling of the revolutionary heroine and the allegorical Maid was a natural consequence of the process by which unifying patriotic signifiers were established in the Republic. Clearly, the two female archetypes bolstered one another's popularity in the Dutch imagination. In a manner comparable to the heroine depictions, images of the Maid were quickly claimed by the visual culture of the new federation, as is demonstrated by her very public presentation in numerous media during the seventeenth century. So, it is essential to consider what this allegorical figure might have signified for women. In this regard, I agree with historian Marina Warner that, "… a symbolized female presence both gives and takes value and meaning in relation to actual women, and contains the potential for affirmation not only of women themselves but of the general good they might represent and in which as half of humanity they are deeply implicated."[31] Thus, I would suggest that contemporary women not only emulated this powerful role model, as they would the heroines, they also referenced her as a tool for fashioning and constructing female identity generally. And that identity consisted of "manly" characteristics such as bravery and fortitude. In Claes Jansz. Visscher's *Batavian Mirror* of 1610, for example, the Dutch Maid is a powerful warrior but in contemporary dress like the heroines (Fig. 3.9). She grasps her lance in one hand and the seven arrows signifying the United Provinces in the other. She has become a protectress of the shields of the seven provinces and of religion and citizens' rights all situated around the base of her throne. The Maid's triumph is assured via her armed and dominating presence. In such an image, the militaristic conflation of the actual heroine archetype and the allegorical heroine archetype again becomes evident.

31 Marina Warner, *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), xx.

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FIGURE 3.9 Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Batavian Mirror*, 1610, detail, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

In a history of the Revolt by Famianus Strada (1572–1649), entitled *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlandsche oorlogen* (*The First Ten Books of the Netherlandish Wars*, first published in 1632 but written c. 1602) the titleplate displays an even more bellicose Maid of Holland (Fig. 3.10). Her clothing has taken on the hybrid form of Minerva's garb and the military attire of a Roman general. In addition to being surrounded by various coats of arms, she is deluged by weaponry in a manner comparable to Kenau images. Her militant character is in keeping with the content of the book, which records in great detail the events of the war with Spain including an account of Kenau. Significantly, in this text Kenau is described as the leader of a troop of women who pounced on the enemy with such zeal that they were thoroughly astonished.[32] Perhaps this model of female bravery was the partial inspiration for the intrepid Maid on the titleplate.

It is likely that this book illustration influenced the design for a stained-glass window in the church at Biervliet from 1660 (Fig. 3.11). As in the previous engraving, a Minerva-like helmeted female is shown seated and grasping a spear with her right hand. Her left arm is akimbo and resting on a shield. The power of the Maid is further emphasized in this design by the familiar and ferocious Medusa head which decorates her shield as an allusion to Minerva's role in

32 P. Famianus Strada, *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlandsche oorloge*, 10 volumes (Dordrecht: Nicolaes van Ravesteyn, 1646), 7:524. Strada's book, *De Bello Belgico*, was published in Rome in 1632 and was translated into Dutch in 1646 by Guillaume van Aelst. The book draws from the memoirs of Cardinal Bentivoglio that were written ca. 1602.

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FIGURE 3.10 Engraved frontispiece from Famianus Strada, *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlandsche oorlogen*, 1632

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the Perseus myth. The Maid's bellicosity is once again accentuated by the surrounding profusion of arms, which includes halberds and spears. This abundant weaponry and the triumphal arch that accompany the armed female figure are significant continuations of Dutch heroine and *Hollandia* signifiers. Furthermore, like these precedents, this Maid was clearly meant to engender unifying patriotic sentiment – evidenced by the flanking window bearing the arms of William III (1650–1702). In 1660, William's mother Mary (1631–1660) and his grandmother Amalia van Solms (1602–1675) were in the process of trying to persuade several of the provinces to re-adopt the Prince of Orange as their stadtholder during the First Stadtholderless Period (1650–1672). It was hoped that the patriotic fervor invoked by the warrior Maid would aid this campaign.[33]

As a result of this constant reimaging, by the mid-seventeenth century the warrior Maid of Holland had become a popular figure in prints and book illustrations like Strada's titleplate. For example, in her Minerva garb with her warrior lion, she dominates another titleplate for a history by Pieter C. Hooft (1581–1647) *Neederlandsche histoorien* (*Dutch history*, 1642, Fig. 3.12).[34] Once again, tales of the bellicose Kenau may have inspired the depiction, as Hooft claims within the text that the legion of housewives under Kenau's command was over three hundred. He praises Kenau as a brave "*mannin*" (female man), and describes her as being armed with spear, gun, and rapier while leading women against the enemy. By mid-century such exaggerated recountings of Kenau's deeds began to fashion her into a kind of revolutionary symbol. Hence,

33 The Maid of Holland had long been used as a unifying metaphor for the House of Orange. However, most of these instances represent the Maid in a less bellicose and more feminine guise. Such examples include a painting of young William III and the Maid of Holland that was done by the artist Daniël Haringh, but in this case he seems to be protecting the Maid. The present location of the work is unknown, but it appeared in a Christie's sale in London, 1998-10-30, lotnr. 38. Previously, the Maid had appeared in conjunction with William's ancestor, Maurits, in a painting by Jan Tengnagel (1601–1625), Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft. In this painting Maurits, together with the Maid, holds the lance topped by the liberty hat. The Maid of Holland was used again as a patriotic, pro-Orange signifier in a 1681 painting commissioned by the Haarlem city council of the past stadtholder Frederik Hendrik next to the Maid of Holland. He is shown crowned with a laurel wreath in honor of his military victories. See, Neeltje Köhler and Pieter Biesboer, *Painting in Haarlem 1500–1850: The Collection of the Frans Hals Museum* (Ghent: Ludion, 2006), 412–15. A thorough discussion of the numerous depictions of the Maid of Holland, or Liberty, in connection with the House of Orange are discussed in Janson, *Birth of Dutch Liberty*, 108–19.

34 Pieter C. Hooft, *Neederlandsche Histoorien, seedert de ooverdraght der heerschappye van kaizar Karel den Vyfden op kooning Philips zynen zoon* (Amsterdam: Louys Elzevier, 1642), 286.

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FIGURE 3.11
Attributed to Cornelis van Barlaer, *Maid of Holland with Portrait and Arms of William III*, detail, 1660, Biervliet, Reformed Church

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FIGURE 3.12 Engraved frontispiece from Pieter C. Hooft, *Neederlandsche histoorien*, 1642

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both types of militant female figures, as found in this text, were employed to glorify and reassure the Republic.

3 Assimilating Allegory

Through this continued merging of heroic female *topoi*, the Dutch significantly ritualized the depiction of powerful women. These "memory figures"[35] contributed to the stabilization of the new Republic, and they helped convey the society's new self-image. Therefore, their myths had important functional properties in the establishment of social cohesion. And as Jan Assman has theorized, such myths are critical in the establishment of collective identity: "Myth is a story one tells oneself in order to orient oneself in the world; a truth of a higher order, which is not simply true but in addition makes normative claims and possesses a formative power."[36] In this way, the images of heroic maids imbued an ideology that venerated women who had adopted traditionally male traits in the service of the Fatherland. In addition, they influenced positive cultural attitudes towards women who crossed "natural" gender boundaries. Thus, in addition to helping inculcate patriotic pride in, and support for, the new federation, these images also established distinctive and new conventions of behavior for future Dutch women. Consequently, they functioned as more than collective or cultural memories, they also symbolized female possibilities and aspirations in this new social construction.

In order to more fully understand the range of discursive possibilities around the invention of this newly developing semiotic field of heroic female prints, it is critical to theorize about the power and meaning of the medium in seventeenth-century Dutch culture. Specifically, it is important to understand how this new reproductive medium functioned in what was perhaps the first modern consumer culture. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch were establishing a standard of commodification and spectacle that became the envy of all Europe. It has been suggested, for example, that the many representations of luxury goods in the visual culture of the time created and fulfilled a longing and desire to own these objects.[37] In comparable fashion, owning representations

35 Jan Assmann introduces the designation of "memory figures" (*Erinnerungsfiguren*) in *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992).

36 This translation of Jan Assmann is found in Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. Sara B. Young (Houndmills; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 34.

37 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London; New York: British Broadcasting Corp.; Penguin Books, 1972), 83–112; Bernd Wolfgang Lindemann, *From Rembrandt to Vermeer: Civil Values*

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of the manly female celebrities and allegories of the era via the accessible print could satisfy another type of personal wish fulfillment and psychological projection of oneself that similarly subverted sex-typed behaviors.[38] Due to the easy access of these images, the social construction of women would obviously have entailed a familiarization with these allegorical and historical heroines. Furthermore, it would have inspired emulation in women's attempts to correspondingly acquire celebrated public status.

That women did imagine themselves in these roles will become evident in their use of these images as models and templates to fashion themselves throughout the century. A few scholars, for example, have discussed the interest of elite women of the Republic in having themselves portrayed as ancient exempla, just as the heroines of the Revolt were frequently associated with the biblical Judith and the ancient Amazons. Research suggests that such historiated portraits would have similarly endowed the sitter with the virtues of these renowned predecessors. The guises of both biblical and mythological women were employed to give women, especially women at the court of the Stadholder in The Hague, a forceful public presence.[39] Such power-engendering historiated portraiture was particularly important to Amalia van Solms, wife of Frederick Henry (1584–1647) Prince of Orange. Amalia significantly influenced both the culture and politics of court life at The Hague.[40] Therefore,

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in 17th-Century Flemish and Dutch Painting: Masterpieces of the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (Milan: Motta, 2008).

38 Production of the subject via the consumption of art is the theme of several essays in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds., *The Consumption of Culture 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995).

39 Ilya Veldman first discussed the use of biblical role models in "Lessons for Ladies: A Selection of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prints," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16(2–3) (1986): 113–27. Yvonne Bleyerveld continued this discussion of assimilation and introduced a few historiated portraits in "Chaste, Obedient and Devout: Biblical Women as Patterns of Female Virtue in Netherlandish and German Graphic Art, ca. 1500–1750," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 28(4) (2000–2001): 219–50. Alison McNeil Kettering particularly emphasized the use of Diana in historiated portraiture in "Gender Issues in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture: A New Look," in *Rembrandt, Rubens, and the Art of their Times: Recent Perspectives*, eds. Roland E. Fleischer and Susan C. Scott (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 144–75. A very thorough analysis of how Dutch women of the court associated themselves with ancient heroines was undertaken in a dissertation study by Sarah M. Crawford-Parker, "Refashioning Female Identity: Women's Roles in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Historiated Portraits," (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2006).

40 Scholarship on Amalia van Solms includes: Adriaan Willem Eliza Dek, *Genealogie van het vorstenhuis Nassau* (Zaltbommel: Europese Bibliotheek, 1970); Jan Joseph Poelhekke, *Frederik Hendrik, Prins van Oranje: Een biografisch drieluik* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1978);

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it is not surprising that she, and other women at court, would choose to have themselves portrayed as powerful mythological heroines.[41] For example, the goddess Diana and her associations with attributes of the hunt and warfare are emphasized in Gerard van Honthorst's (1592–1656) *Amalia as Diana at the Hunt with her Sister the Countess van Brederode* of 1627 (Fig. 3.13).[42] The bellicose nature of this horde of warring Amazons is reminiscent of both descriptions and depictions of Dutch heroines. Another gender-breaching role model from antiquity was the familiar Minerva. In Honthorst's portrait of Elisabeth van Solms (sister to Amalia) as Minerva in armor, the manner in which the spear-bearing and cross-dressing female figure boldly confronts the viewer's gaze is reminiscent of both revolutionary heroines and Maids of Holland (1632, Fig. 3.14).[43] This recollection of celebrated patriotic signifiers would have greatly benefitted the desires of both Amalia and Elisabeth to expand their influence and power at the Dutch court.

For other women, modeling attributes of the heroic Dutch maids of Holland occurred in less combative and less political ways. An important example of this type of identity construction is found in Ferdinand Bol's (1616–1680) 1663 *Margarita Trip as Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, Teaching her Younger Sister Anna Maria Trip* (Fig. 3.15).[44] Once again, there is a *Hollandian* conflation of classical and religious traditions, as depictions of Mary learning at the knee

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Jan Joseph Poelhekke, "Amalia van Solms," in *Vrouwen in het landsbestuur: Van Adela van Hamaland tot en met koningin Juliana: Vijftien biografische opstellen*, ed. C. A. Tamse (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1982), 111–29; Marika Keblusek and Jorhanna Maria Zijlmans eds., *Vorstelijk vertoon: Aan het hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia* (The Hague; Zwolle: Haags Historisch Museum; Waanders, 1997); Peter van der Ploeg, Carola Vermeeren, Bernardus Petrus Jozef Broos, and Marlies Enklaar, eds., *Vorstelijk verzameld: De kunstcollectie van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia* (The Hague; Zwolle: Mauritshuis; Waanders, 1997); Luuc Kooijmans, *Liefde in opdracht: Het hofleven van Willem Frederik van Nassau* (Amsterdam; Ljouwert: Bakker; Fryske Akademy, 2000).

41 For discussions of such historiated portraiture, see Rose Wishnevsky, "Studien Zum 'portrait historie' in den Niederlanden," (Ph.D. diss., Munich, 1967), 75; Crawford-Parker, "Female Identity," 26–78.

42 The figures are identified and the provenance discussed in J. Richard Judson and Rudolf E. O. Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst 1592–1656* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1999), 114–16.

43 The figure is identified in Judson and Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst*, 308. Honthorst also painted Charlotte de la Trémouille, wife of James Stanley, Lord Strange, 7th Earl of Derby in the guise of Minerva.

44 The figures are identified and the painting discussed as an allegory on the the protection of art and knowledge in R. Meischke, Eduard Reeser, and I. H. van Eeghen, *Het Trippenhuis te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1983), 205–06.

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FIGURE 3.13 Gerard van Honthorst, *Amalia as Diana at the Hunt with her Sister the Countess van Brederode*, 1627, present location unknown

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FIGURE 3.14 Gerard van Honthorst, *Portrait of Elisabeth van Solms as Minerva*, 1632, present location unknown

of St. Anne are vividly recalled. Furthermore, the huge volume towed in by the struggling putti is likely to be the Bible so often associated with the Maid of Holland.[45] Beyond the religious overtones, however, there is a significant melding of the gender-breaching characteristics of Minerva as warrior and of

45 It is generally accepted that the Maid of Holland's accompanying text is a Bible, and this particular pairing would seem to support such a suggestion. Albert Blankert also considers the book to be the Bible, which corresponds to the symbol of immortality, the peacock, next to Minerva, in *Ferdinand Bol* (Doornspijk, The Netherlands: Davaco, 1982), 107. He interprets this painting as an allegory on education.

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FIGURE 3.15 Ferdinand Bol, *Margarita Trip as Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, Teaching her Younger Sister Anna Maria Trip*, 1663, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Minerva as wise scholar in order to bestow these manly and heroic attributes on the young Margarita.

This type of assimilation by contemporary women will perhaps be even better understood by first examining an interesting titleplate for the text *Lof der schilder-konst* (Praise of the Art of Painting, 1642) by the Leiden artist and theorist Philips Angel (Fig. 3.16).[46] Chapman suggests that the Maid of Holland's wattle fence was here combined with armored Pallas Minerva as goddess of

46 Philips Angel, *Lof der schilder-konst* (Leiden: Willem Christiaens van der Boxe, 1642).

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FIGURE 3.16
Engraved frontispiece from Philips Angel, *Lof der Schilder-Konst*, 1642

the arts and with the allegorical figure *Pictura*, or painting, via her palette and brushes.[47] She asserts that this hybrid maiden was thus a glorification of the modern Dutch painting tradition as equaling the renowned art of antiquity. It is important to remember, however, that the Dutch had already adopted Minerva as a symbol for the Republic. While the allegory certainly borrowed the goddess from antiquity, by 1642 she was already a patriotic symbol of the United Provinces and of Leiden in particular.[48] Hence, the title plate is a significant celebration of Dutch art in and of itself. And these two patriotic references to the Maid of Holland and Dutch *Pictura* would become important signifiers for women. Indeed, famed women artists came to be viewed as triumphant heroines and *Hollandias*.

47 H. Perry Chapman, "*A Hollandse Pictura*: observations on the title page of Philips Angel's *Lof der schilder-konst*," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16(4) (1986): 233–48. References on Minerva as protector of the arts include: A. Pigler, "Neid und Unwissenheit als Widersacher der Kunst," *Acta Historiae Artium* 1 (1953–1954), 215–35; E. R. M. Taverne, "Pictura: enkele allegorieën op de schilderkunst," in *Het schildersatelier in de Nederlanden 1500–1800* (Nijmegen: De Waag, 1964), 31–46; Eddy de Jongh, "The Artist's Apprentice and Minerva's Secret: An Allegory of Drawing by Jan de Lairesse," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 13(3/4) (1983): 201–17.

48 Eric J. Sluijter, *De lof der schilderkunst: Over schilderijen van Gerrit Dou (1613–1675) en een traktaat van Philips Angel uit 1642* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1993), 16–17.

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Furthermore, female artists and scholars of the Golden Age who attained civic and national renown did so in part via numerous adulatory texts and images that employed these same associations. Characterized as heroines and Minervas by their contemporaries, these women, like their heroic predecessors, triumphed in the male, public sphere and acquired such fame that later generations of women followed in their footsteps. Their celebrity is, I argue, a compelling indicator of the lasting influence of the heroic Dutch Maid tradition.

For example, the scholar and artist Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678) was inarguably the most internationally famous woman of the Republic.[49] She received a great deal of acclaim for both her scholarly and artistic pursuits. Importantly, she devoted much of her artistic activity to the the production of self-portraiture. It is significant that some of these portrayals directly recall the depictions of heroic women, and indeed, she was considered a heroine by many of her contemporaries. For example, in Hubertus Beets's pro-female text, *Oratio in laudem mulieris*, 1650, he opens with an image of the heroic Judith beheading Holofernes and closes with a lengthy ode to the "Batavian miracle", Van Schurman – a pairing that recalls the famous Kenau.[50] And in more explicit connection with her allegorical and actual predecessors, others called her the "Utrecht Minerva" and labeled her a "heroine" and a "jewel of the Fatherland."[51] Such glorifying publicity helped create and spread the fame of this woman who truly became an international celebrity as elites from around Europe anxiously initiated correspondence with her. Due to her writings and those of her circle, a kind of protofeminist sisterhood developed with women supporting one another via their laudatory art and poetry. Women's new

49 An enormous amount of scholarship documenting the life and works of Van Schurman has been published particularly since the 1970s. Perhaps the most thorough introduction to her life is found in Pieta van Beek, *The First Female University Student: Anna Maria van Schurman (1636)*, trans. Anna-Mart Bonthuys and Dineke Ehlers (Utrecht: Igitur, 2007, originally published in 2004). A more recent text on Van Schurman also summarizes this scholarship, see Anne R. Larsen, *Anna Maria van Schurman, 'The Star of Utrecht': The Educational Vision and Reception of a Savante* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).

50 Hubertus Beets, *Oratio in laudem mulieris* (Haarlem: Vincent Casteleyn, 1650).

51 Comparisons with Minerva are found in the dedication of Van Beverwijck, *Wtnementheyt*. She is called a jewel of the Fatherland in Constantijn Huygens, *De gedichten van Constantijn Huygens naar zijn handschrift uitgegeven*, ed. J. A. Worp, 9 volumes (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1892–99), 3:48–49. Jacob Cats also refers to her as a jewel of national pride in, *Houwelyck, Vrouwe* (Middleburgh: Jan Pieters vande Venne, 1625), 48. Van Beverwijck and Adolph Vorstius both call her a heroine in Anna Maria van Schurman, *Opuscula Hebraea Graeca Latina et Gallica, prosaica et metrica* (Utrecht: Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1652, originally published in 1648), 319–64.

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access to these voluntary circles of intellectuals greatly enhanced their abilities to have a social voice.[52] Their art and writings all contributed to a sense of women as knowledgeable and skilled in manly ways. As a result, these women were able to positively and collectively give shape to female identity in Dutch society, as they victoriously crossed traditional gender boundaries.[53]

Van Schurman's further links with the heroic Dutch maids of the past are particularly evident in one of her texts, *Opuscula Hebraea Graeca Latina et Gallica, prosaica et metrica*, (*Little works in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French*) which was first published in 1648 and reprinted in 1650, 1652, and 1672. The text opens with an iconic image of Van Schurman after an earlier self-portrait, which includes an inscription indicating that the full marvel of this woman will only be partially revealed in the text. Clearly, she understood that in order to compete in a man's world, she had to employ the male tactic of publicly representing herself and pronouncing her capabilities. Therefore, a portion of this text is completely devoted to acquaintances's praise of her abilities.[54] In these verses, frequent comparisons are made with the goddess Minerva, and she is also labeled a heroine and a virago, or a woman who does violent battle. One verse even familiarly compares her to the ancient Amazons. Such comparisons immediately recall the epithets applied to Dutch heroic female archetypes. Evidence that Van Schurman, herself, saw her life-long task of elevating the status of women as a heroic battle is found in her letter to the protofeminist Marie le Jars de Gournay (1565–1645) in *Opuscula*.

> Anna Maria van Schurman congratulates
> The great and noble-minded heroine of Gournay

52 Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch Culture*, 217–19.

53 Annelies de Jeu discusses networks of female writers in the Republic in *'t Spoor der dichteressen: Netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000). Although she emphasizes that these women still needed men to publish and receive public notoriety, it is important to acknowledge the fact that, as these women published about each other, they did achieve social recognition. Van Schurman's networks outside of the Republic are discussed in Mirjam de Baar, "'God Has Chosen You to Be a Crown of Glory for All Women!': The International Network of Learned Women Surrounding Anna Maria van Schurman," in *'I Have Heard about You': Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf*, eds. Suzan van Dijk, Petra Broomans, Janet F. van der Meulen, and Pim van Oostrum (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), 108–35; Barbara Bulckaert also discusses Van Schurman's networks in "Self-Tuition and the Intellectual Achievement of Early Modern Women: Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)," in *Women, Education, and Agency, 1600–2000*, eds. Jean Spence, Sarah Jane Aiston, and Maureen M. Meikle (New York: Routledge, 2010), 9–24.

54 Van Schurman, *Opuscula*, 319–64.

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> Strong defender of the cause of our sex.
> You bear the arms of Pallas, bold heroine in battles
> And so that you may carry the laurels, you bear the arms of Pallas.
> Thus it is fitting for you to make a defence for the innocent sex
> And to turn the weapons of harmful men against them.
> Lead on, glory of Gournay, we shall follow your standard,
> For in you our cause advances, which is mightier than strength.[55]

All the familiar language surrounding heroic female icons is present in this poem. She not only calls De Gournay a heroine, but she speaks of doing battle with men by being armed as Pallas Minerva. Furthermore, she follows De Gournay's example, which will lead all women to victory and a crowning with triumphant laurels.

In addition to praising Van Schurman, these letters also celebrated the city of Utrecht, the home that she had made so famous. Undoubtedly, much of this rhetoric was inspired by the descriptions of past heroines who similarly bestowed fame on their cities. Furthermore, like the heroines, she was an important figure in the cultural memory of the Republic generally. In this manner, she became a proud patriotic symbol of the United Provinces. Her renowned scholarly contributions to the Republic were considered equal to the battling women of the Revolt and the warrior Maids of Holland. At the same time, her portraits and texts helped further structure definitions of "woman" and positive attitudes toward female transgression of traditional gender roles from early on in the Republic.

In fact, her image and praise of her abilities were consistently circulated in a variety of contexts, which ensured a cultural tradition that valued and paid homage to this legendary figure. This constructed visual and textual history created a cultural memory of this famed Dutch woman that would remain influential throughout the seventeenth century regarding perceptions of the ways in which a woman could take on traditionally male traits and abilities, especially intellectual genius and artistic skills. Importantly, the aggrandizing nature of the heroic female visual tradition was adopted in order to bestow similar status on Van Schurman. Traces of heroic female imagery of the past

55 Van Schurman, *Opuscula*, 303. The English translation is from Anna Maria van Schurman, *Whether a Christian Woman Should Be Educated and Other Writings from Her Intellectual Circle*, trans. and ed. Joyce L. Irwin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 13. "*Magni ac generosi animi Heroinae Gornacensi, Causam sexus nostri fortiter defendenti gratulatur Anna Maria à Schurman Palladis arma geris, bellis animosa virago; Utque geras lauros, Palladis arma geris. Sic decet innocui causam te dicere sexus, Et propria insontes vertere tela viros. I prae Gornacense decus, tua signa sequemur: Quippe tibi potior, robore, causa praeit.*"

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are particularly evident in a bold self-portrait designed by Van Schurman and included in a Jacob Cats dedication to her at the outset of his text *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Steen van den Selven* (*The World's Beginning, Middle and End, Comprised in the Wedding Ring, With the Touch Stone of the Same*, Fig. 3.17). Accompanying the image is an inscription proclaiming her fame and glory and also a page-long description of all her talents in learning, art, and music.[56] In the image, the celebratory view of the Utrecht church under a triumphal arch is reminiscent of both Kenau and *Hollandia* imagery in its reminder of the religious, civic, and national pride attached to female heroines. Also comparable are the manly prostheses of fame and power: in heroine images, these were weapons and Spanish heads, and in Van Schurman's portrait these are scholarly manuscripts and writing implements. Importantly, the heroine images had already crossed gender boundaries by equating female bravery with that of men in the inscriptions and by picturing women armed like men in heroic hand-on-hip poses. Thus, when Van Schurman adopts these aspects and manipulates them to proclaim her celebrated status, there were already pictorial precedents that had bestowed public fame on female subjects. Significantly, Van Schurman's glorified self-portrait reappeared in multiple editions of Cats's *'S Werelts Begin* (first published in 1637) and in his collected works, thus disseminating her powerful and influential image throughout the Republic.

A profound example of the consequences of Van Schurman's fame for other women is found in the admiring verses of Charlotte de Huybert (c. 1622–after 1644). De Huybert, daughter of a Leiden lawyer, was praised as a skilled poet by Van Beverwijck, and he includes one of her poems in his text. The inclusion of this poem is significant because it provides a female perspective on Van

56 Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken, So ouden als nieuwe, van de Heer Iacob Cats, Ridder, oudt Raedtpensionaris van Hollandt, &c.* (Amsterdam: Jan Jacobsz. Schipper, 1655), forward to *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Steen van den Selven* (there are no page numbers, but it would be page 8 and verso). In his dedication, Cats states that the image is a self-portrait, but it is not known if Van Schurman engraved the work or whether it was simply done after her drawing. It is important to remember, however, that Van Schurman did other self-portrait engravings, so the print may be by her hand. Cats's inscription reads, "*Nu soo isset alsoo dat niet alleen de hooghe Schole van het Sticht van Utrecht, maer oock menigh geleert man in Hollant met volle reden van wetenschap kan getuygen, dat al het gene voren is verhaelt, gelijckelick is te vinden in den persoon van Jonck-vrou Anna Maria Schuerrmans: wiens beelt na 't leven by haer selfs uyt een spiegel kunstelick geteyckent wy den Leser hier in 't koper ghesneden gunstelick mede-deelen; als een wonder niet alleen van onse, maer oock van de voorige eeuwen. En daer op besluytende, segge ick: O licht van uwen tijt, en Peerel van den douck! Ghy die ons Eeuwe çiert, verçiert oock desen Bouck.*"

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Hier ſiet ghy, goet-gunſtige Leſer, een af-beeldinge van Jonck-vrou
Anna Maria Schurmans, naer het leven gedaen: onder het welc-
ke wy geſtelt hebben het veers dat ghy daer leſen meught.
Wie oyt dit aerdig beelt ſult komen aen te ſchouwen,
Houd vaſt, dat ſy hier ſiet een room voor alle vrouwen,
Van dat de werelt ſtout tot heden op-en dagh,
Niet een die haer geleek of na bereycken magh.
MAer niemant dencke dat wy hier dichten plach te geſchieden) te ruym en-
(ghelijck wel ſomwijlen in lof- de wijdt-mondigh hebben gheſproken.
* * * * * * 2 Neen

FIGURE 3.17 After Anna Maria van Schurman, *Self-Portrait*, from Jacob Cats, *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Steen van den Selven*, 1655

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Schurman and on women taking up male roles. Moreover, it fashions a place for De Huybert herself as a woman trying to make her own public reputation. Her praise of Van Schurman forcefully indicates how extremely important this celebrity had become as a role model for Dutch women:

> To you, Miss, we are grateful, for your talented spirit was the motive for this praiseworthy work [speaking of Van Beverwijck's text].
>
> Your virtue remains women's virtue, your wisdom women's wisdom: so that through your name all women are praised, your glory is glory to us …[57]

Importantly, this ode further enhanced the pro-female discourse that already celebrated both military and cultural heroines. Hence, the public discussion initiated by and around these women formed part of the social learning to which young women in the Republic were exposed. In this manner, the accomplishments of Van Schurman became part of the cultural imaginary and provided the necessary symbols for other women to self-determine and self-define in enabling ways. And just as Van Schurman employed her agency to successfully manipulate the schema of sex-typed behaviors and reshape notions of female identity, later generations of women were also agents who could give further voice to the less frequently verbalized discourses of female power.

Confirmation that Van Schurman was viewed as a role model for other Dutch women can be found in other numerous verses written by women in praise of her accomplishments.[58] These women include the poetesses Sybille van Griethuisen (1621–1699), Maria Margaretha van Akerlaacken (1605–c. 1670), and Johanna Hobius (c. 1614–c. 1643) who wrote a rhyming text lauding women generally and entitled *Lof der vrouwen* (*Praise of women*, 1643).

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57 De Huybert's verse is included in the introduction to Van Beverwijck, *Wtnementheyt*, Book 3. The translation is from Van Beek, *First Female Student*, 153. Further literature on De Huybert includes: Marijke Spies, "Charlotte de Huybert en het gelijk. De geleerde en de werkende vrouw in de zeventiende eeuw," *Literatuur* 3 (1986): 339–50; Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "Schrijvende Vrouwen in de Gouden Eeuw: Onmogelijke Mogelijkheid," in *Nederlands 200 jaar later*, ed. Hugo Brems (Woubrugge: Internationale Vereniging voor Neerlandistiek, 1998), 119; De Jeu, *'t Spoor der Dichteressen*, 177–78. "*U Juffrouw dancken wy, dat u begaefde geest Van dit lofwaerdigh Werck de oorsaeck is geweest. U deught blijft 's Vrouwen deugt, u wijsheyt 's Vrouwen wijsheyt: Soo dat in uwen naem ock aller Vrouwen prijs leyt. U lof is ons tot lof …*".

58 De Baar and Van Beek also point to Van Schurman as a role model in "The international network of learned women surrounding Anna Maria van Schurman" and in *First Female Student*. They both discuss Van Schurman eulogies by many women of the Republic at length.

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This catalog of "good women" begins with biblical and ancient examples and concludes with her own era and effusive praise for Van Schurman. She extols this famed adornment of women whose radiance shines on all women and who stands as the most honored female in the midst of men. She details her knowledge and wisdom, her ability with languages and her writing, her glass engraving and painting (including a self-portrait), and her musical abilities. After this eulogy she puts out a call to all women who want to praise Van Schurman and crown her with laurels to think on this poem and how it will influence them.[59]

Hobius, herself, sets an example for other women by following in Van Schurman's footsteps with her own poetic writings. This emulation was not lost on her contemporaries as is witnessed in a final inclusion to the text, which is a poem by Antonis de Huybert. He eulogizes Hobius and says that she has become the pride of her Fatherland. Moreover, he claims that Van Schurman's glory will fade in comparison with Hobius's fame.[60] The title plate to this small text is also an important reminder of the consistent signifiers associated with famed women of the Republic (Fig. 3.18). It depicts Minerva as goddess of wisdom and the arts, but also as the Maid of Holland, crowning a contemporary maid of Holland with a laurel wreath as she writes in a book. Above, a figure trumpets the glory of women who are celebrated because of their various accomplishments in learning, the arts, and music symbolized by the books, the embroidery frame, and the musical instruments.

Perhaps no praise of a woman's artistic abilities surpasses that lavished upon the turn of the century figure Joanna Koerten (1650–1715), whose talents were also compared to those of Van Schurman.[61] This now little known paper-

59 Johanna Hobius, *Het lof der vrouwen* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Janssen, 1643), A7 and A8 recto and verso particularly discuss Van Schurman.

60 Hobius, *Het lof der vrouwen*, B8 recto.

61 For scholarship on Koerten see J. D. C. van Dokkum, "Hanna de knipster en haar concurrenten. Een studie over Oud-Hollandsche schaarkunst'," *Het Huis Oud en Nieuw* 13 (1915): 335–58; Michiel Plomp, "De schaar-Minerve: Joanna Koerten (1650–1715)," *Teylers Museum Magazijn* 12 (Summer 1986): 10–13; B. Bakker, E. Fleurbaay, A. W. Gerlagh, *De verzameling Van Eeghen: Amsterdamse tekeningen 1600–1950*, (Zwolle: Waanders, 1989), 117–22; C. G. Bogaard, *De schaar-Minerva Johanna Koerten (1650–1715) en de waardering voor de 'papieren snykonst'* (Ph.D. diss., Utrecht, 1989); Michiel Plomp, "De portretten uit het stamboek voor Joanna Koerten (1650–1715)," *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 8 (1989): 323–44; R. J. A. te Rijdt, "Jan Goeree, het stamboek van Joanna Koerten en de datering ervan," *Delineavit et Sculpsit* 17 (1997): 48–56; Jos Hiddes, "Kunstenaressen in de marge? Over knipkunst, calligrafie en roem," in *Vrouwen en kunst in de Republiek. Een overzicht*, eds. Els Kloek, Catherine Peters Sengers, and Esther Tobé (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 107–18; Henk van

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FIGURE 3.18
Engraved frontispiece from Johanna Hobius, *Lof der vrouwen*, 1643

cutting artist was at one time an internationally renowned figure, and the artist biographer Arnold Houbraken's praise of her is particularly striking.[62] In addition, several of Koerten's contemporaries, both male and female, also wrote lauding verses and signed an autograph book, or *Stamboek*, in honor of this famous artist. This included national and international celebrities like Peter the Great, who visited her workshop. This collection of admiring drawings and poems was kept even after her death by her husband and was published twice in the eighteenth century.[63] This publication reminds us of Van Schurman's

Ark ed., *Joanna Koerten*, in several editions, *Nieuwsbrief van het Nederlands Museum van Knipkunst en de Stichting*; M. Roscam Abbing, "Joanna Koerten (1650–1715) en David van Hoogstraten (1658–1724). Een bijzondere relatie tussen twee bekende Amsterdammers," *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 94(2) (2007): 14–29; J. Verhave en J. P. Verhave, *Geknipt! Geschiedenis van de papierknipkunst in Nederland* (Zutphen, Walburg Pers, 2008), 20–24; Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Paper as power. Carving a niche for the female artist in the work of Joanna Koerten," *Nederlands Jaarboek voor Kunstgeschiedenis* 62 (2013): 238–65; Kees Kaldenbach, *Tekeningen uit het album amicorum* (*Stamboek*) *van Joanna Koerten Blok: een overszicht met index* (Amsterdam: published by the author, 2014).

62 Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen, waar van 'er vele met hunne beeltenissen ten tooneel verschynen, en hun levensgedrag en konstwerken beschreven worden: zynde een vervolg op het Schilderboek van K. v. Mander*, 3 volumes (Amsterdam: published by the author, 1718–21), 3:293–308.

63 *Het stamboek op de papiere snykunst van mejuffouw Joanna Koerten*, (Amsterdam 1735); *Op de papiere snykunst van juffrouw Joanna Koerten*, (Amsterdam 1736).

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self-fashioning in *Opuscula*. Nevertheless, such attention to a female artist in these eulogizing collections was unprecedented. Moreover, there were a number of women who contributed to the text; this included a still-life drawing by Van Schurman.

Houbraken's son Jacob (1698–1780) was clearly linking Koerten's fame back to her famous female predecessor in his album drawing in which Van Schurman's portrait is paired with Koerten's and the two are accompanied by artistic and scholarly tools, including books and papers, palette and brushes, as well as a pair of scissors (Fig. 3.19). A sculpted figure of Minerva looks up in admiration toward these tremendously famous women. Minerva's inclusion reminds the viewer that both women were inheritors of the goddess's name as a meritorious appellation – Koerten was known as the Scissors-Minerva.[64] Moreover, Minerva's lance-wielding, militaristic appearance must also have conjured up cultural memories of the revolutionary heroines and the Maid of Holland in their subversion of manly roles. This cultural memory of heroic females becomes obvious in album verses which claim that Koerten's struggle eclipsed that of the Amazons and so deserved great fame.[65] Indeed, the poetess Gesine Brit often calls her the "*Kunstheldin*" (art heroine) of the Amstel River in her ode to Koerten from the S*tamboek* that was republished in Houbraken's biography.[66] Importantly, she claims that Koerten's heroism is particularly notable due to the fact that nature is against women in the arena of art. Thus, once again, it is a woman's ability to transgress gender boundaries and exemplify male abilities that makes her a heroine.

Many poems in the *Stamboek* elaborate on the fame that Koerten brought to the city and one author even calls her studio in Amsterdam, the eighth wonder of the world.[67] In this vein, another celebratory drawing, by Jan van Vianen, depicts the militaristic figure of the Dutch/Amsterdam Maid with her sword-bearing lion in front of the Stadhuis, or city hall (Fig. 3.20). This triumphant figure is accompanied by a god symbolizing Amsterdam's Ij River and by two putti carrying scissors and a portrait of Koerten.[68] In this manner, the citizens of Amsterdam are celebrating their own unique heroic maid.

64 *Stamboek*, 75.

65 *Stamboek*, 64.

66 *Stamboek*, 37–42.

67 *Stamboek*, patriotic inscriptions to the city of Amsterdam are found on the following pages: 28, 111, 124–30, 144–45.

68 In similar fashion, Mattheus Terwesten drew an apotheosis of Koerten in which her portrait is presented to the Dutch/Amsterdam Maid. The drawing is in the Gemeentearchief, Amsterdam.

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FIGURE 3.19 Jacob Houbraken, *Double Portrait of Joanna Koerten and Anna Maria van Schurman*, c. 1720–1740, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

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FIGURE 3.20 Jan van Vianen, *The Maid of Amsterdam with Tribute to Joanna Koerten*, c. 1726, Gemeente Stadsarchief, Amsterdam

In another drawing from the *stamboek*, there is significant evidence as to how dramatically this cultural heroine had been able to alter male attitudes in regards to representing the fame and glory of accomplished women. In a drawing with inscription by Philip Tideman (1657–1705), he praises Koerten by portraying her at her toilette gazing into a mirror (Fig. 3.21). She is accompanied by two eulogizing, allegorical figures. One wears a laurel crown and carries a triumphal palm. The other is the Minervan Maid of Holland who is ready to bestow glory on this Amsterdam artist with her ready scissors. The accompanying verses indicate how Koerten had helped to construct a positive female identity in Dutch culture.

> Joanna Koerten, your jewels are ways of Virtue and Art that accompany and adorn you. Joanna does not wear ostentatious robes. She wears

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FIGURE 3.21 Philip Tideman and Arnold Houbraken, *Monument for Joanna Koerten*, detail, c. 1720–1725, Gemeente Stadsarchief, Amsterdam

> neither precious treasure nor gold; but she displays virtue and artistic adornment that never age.[69]

An astonishing subversion of misogynist biases regarding women's character is accomplished in this drawing. The accompanying verses indicate how Koerten's fame had constructed a new identity for women; it was an identity that rejected traditional sex-typed characteristics such as female vanity and beauty and instead adopted manly skill. Furthermore, this was accomplished in part by referencing the familiar Minerva/*Hollandia* allegory.

Such female triumph is also reflected in Koerten's most beloved work, a cutting of the *Roman Goddess of Liberty*, 1697, that she kept throughout her

69 *Joanna Koerten, uw juweelen zijn manieren van Deugt en Konst die u versellen en versieren. Joanna draegt geen praalgewaden. Zij draegt kleinodien noch gout. Maar pronkt met deugt en kunstsieraden. Waar van de luister noit verout.*

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FIGURE 3.22 Joanna Koerten, *Roman Liberty*, 1697, Westfries Museum, Hoorn

life and which she presumably chose to decorate the original title plate to the *Stamboek* (Fig. 3.22). The design for this image was likely inspired by another titleplate depicting the Maid of Holland. In 1660, Philipp von Zesen published his history of Amsterdam, *Leo Belgicus*, which included an illustration of male portrait heads (including both Roman and Netherlandish rulers) surrounding the enthroned *Hollandia* (Fig. 3.23).[70] Similarly, Koerten's heroic female figure surrounded by portraits of ancient emperors and the Roman she-wolf also celebrates the republican values of the Fatherland, but she further displays Koerten's Amazonian efforts in the amazingly detailed technique. This work received significant praise by several contributors to the *Stamboek*, and evidence that it was intended as a showpiece for visitors to her studio is indicated by the self-praising inscription cut at the bottom of the image. Obviously, the

70 Philipp von Zesen, *Philippi Cæsii à Zesen Leo Belgicus, hoc ist, Succincta ac di lucida narratio exordii, progressus, ac denique ad summam perfection redacti stabiliminis, & interioris formæ, ac status, Reipublicæ fœderatarum Belgii regionum* (Amsterdam: Elzevir, 1660).

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FIGURE 3.23
Engraved frontispiece from Philipp von Zesen, *Leo Belgicus*, 1660

artist wanted to be associated with an ancient allegory of female power just like the heroines and Minervas before her.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, several women artists were achieving this type of heroic status. Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), for example, was another important scholar-artist who achieved great renown. Although she was not born in the Dutch Republic, she came to the Netherlands later in life after leaving her husband.[71] In a setting where famous women had

71 There are numerous studies on Merian's life and art including: J. Stuldreher-Nienhuis, *Verborgen paradijzen. Het leven en de werken van Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647–1717* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1944); Elisabeth Rücker, *Maria Sibylla Merian* (Neurenberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 1967); David Freeberg, "Science, commerce, and art: neglected topics at the junction of history and art history," in *Art in history, history in art: studies in seventeenth-century Dutch culture*, eds. David Freeberg and Jan de Vries (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the the History of Art and the Humanities, 1991), 377–86; Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 68–79; Sharon Valiant, "Maria Sibylla Merian. Recovering an eighteenth-century legend," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3 (1993): 467–79; Erika Gemar-Költzsch, *Holländische Stillebenmaler im 17. Jahrhundert* (Lingen: De Luca, 1995); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 140–202; Irina N. Lebedeva, "De nalatenschap van Maria Sibylla Merian in Sint-Petersburg," in *Peter de Grote en Holland. Culturele*

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FIGURE 3.24
Jacob Houbraken after Georg Gsell, *Maria Sibylla Merian*, 1708–1780, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

previously been supported in artistic pursuits, she was able to develop a significant reputation for herself as a painter of plants and insects. She was so successful in selling her works that she was able to raise the funds necessary to travel to Surinam. After her return to the Netherlands, she once again established a successful art trade and published her book of Surinam studies in *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*, 1705.

Merian was also discussed in Houbraken's biography of artists. He included a cropped version of a portrait print of Merian made by his son, Jacob (1698–1780) after a drawing by Georg Gsell. The original print displays another powerful assertion of female accomplishment (Fig. 3.24).[72] Like so many male

en wetenschappelijke betrekkingen tussen Rusland en Nederland ten tijde van tsaar Peter de Grote, eds. Renée Kistemaker, Natalja Kopaneva, Annemiek Overbeek (Bussum: THOTH, 1996), 60–66; Leen Huet and Jan Grieten, *Oude meesteressen. Vrouwelijke kunstenaars in de Nederlanden* (Leuven: Van Halewyck, 1998), 159–85; Kurt Wettengl ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647–1717. Kunstenares en natuuronderzoekster* (Haarlem: Becht, 1998); Helmut Kaiser, *Maria Sibylla Merian. Eine Biographie* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 1997); Katlijne Van der Stighelen and Mirjam Westen, *Elck zijn waerom: Vrouwelijke kunstenaars in België en Nederland 1500–1950* (Ghent: Ludion, 1999), 186–87; Ella Reitsma and Sandrine A. Ulenberg, *Maria Sibylla Merian & Dochters. Vrouwenlevens tussen kunst en wetenschap* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008).

72 Merian's biography is found in Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh*, 3:220–24. A colored version of the print appeared in texts as early as 1717.

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artists's portraits of the era, Merian is depicted in her studio surrounded by her drawings. The insects and plants from which she drew inspiration are also included. The nearby writing implements, books, and globe, as well as the cloth of honor overhead, are all familiar metaphors of accomplishment found in the portraits of Van Schurman. This artistic connection between the two women may have been so explicit due to the fact that they were also united by their faith. Earlier, both women had dwelt in the same religious community founded by the Protestant reformer Jean de Labadie. On the wall behind Merian hangs a shield with symbols from the Merian coat of arms: a stork with a serpent in its mouth. In front of this shield, a miniature female figurine trumpets Merian's fame next to another small, helmeted Minervan Maid of Holland figure that holds a pike and Hat of Liberty. In this manner, there is continuous meaning accruing to the heroine figure who comes to generally represent the triumph and freedom of the Revolt and also the glory of the Republic. Yet more specifically, she also signifies the celebrated women of the Fatherland who are revered as patriotic heroines and scholarly and artistic geniuses and who deserve the enduring association with Minerva.[73] In his text, Houbraken reprints the verse that accompanied the original portrait, in which is found a celebration of her art and a declaration that her name will live on. Thus, this portrait is one further example of the consistent Dutch desire to champion famous female citizenry, and the symbols in Merian's portrait now claim this new celebrity as one more "good woman" of the Republic. Moreover, as this portrait was reproduced in print form, it ensured the broad establishment of her fame in a manner comparable to that employed for her heroine foremothers.

Similar sorts of eulogizing are found in a presumed portrait of the internationally renowned paintress Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750) dated to about 1680 and attributed to Michiel van Musscher (Fig. 3.25).[74] Ruysch, an acclaimed still-life artist of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, is depicted in an exalted pose as she points with her brush to her artistic skill via her painted

73 Merian is referenced in connection with Minerva by Joachim Sandrart, *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura, Scultura e Pittura: Oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahleren-Künste*, 1 (Nuremberg: Jacob van Sandrart, 1675–1679; and Frankfurt: Mathias Merian the Younger, 1675–1679), no. 283, 339.

74 There has been a great deal of informal discussion over the attribution of this painting and the identity of the sitter. Nevertheless, the specificity of the face argues that this is a portrait rather than just an allegory. Moreover, the grandeur of the eulogizing suggests a rather prominent sitter such as Ruysch. Currently, the museum agrees with the attribution of Van Musscher and the subject of Ruysch. A comparable self-portrait of a paintress at an easel has been attributed to Ruysch in Eddy de Jongh and Marjolein de Boer, *Faces of the Golden Age: Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraits* (*English Supplement*) (The Hague: Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, 1994), 65–66.

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FIGURE 3.25
Michiel van Musscher, *Allegorical Portrait of an Artist* (probably Rachel Ruysch), c. 1680, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh

canvas with still life. On the table are sculptures and books as references to her artistic training and achievement. Allegorical figures trumpeting her fame and crowning her with a laurel wreath are reminiscent of other portraits of cultural heroines, as is the cloth of honor. These were fitting adornments and celebrations for the first female artist to be admitted to The Hague painters's guild and who also enjoyed international patronage. This acclaimed artist familiarly wears a medal across her chest – a traditional indicator of royal patronage and favor.[75] Nevertheless, this proudly displayed medal of honor also recalls Kenau imagery, as does the militaristic lance-bearing figure of the Minervan Maid of Holland in the background. Like Van Schurman and Koerten, Ruysch also received this goddess's epithet; she was known as the "Amsterdam Minerva".[76]

75 Specifically, Ruysch's medal identifies her as court painter to Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine of Düsseldorf for whom she painted until his death. Several male self-portraits of the era similarly represent artists with gold medals and chains given by their royal patrons. Julius Held discusses the use of the medal in self-portraiture as a sign of princely favor in *Rembrandt's Aristotle, and other Rembrandt Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 17–58.

76 Margaretha de Heer (c. 1600–1660) was another artist to receive this honor. In the anonymous *Klioos kraam* (Leeuwarden: Hendrick Rintjes, 1656–1657), 308–10, 343–44, she is called Pallas, a pearl, an art goddess, and a hero like Van Schurman by poets such as Sibylle van Griethuysen and Simon Abbes Gabbema. A further discussion of the odes to De Heer in which she is called an art goddess and heroine is found in Veerle Mans, Philippus H. Breuker, and Peter Karstkarel *Margareta de Heer* (*circa 1600–circa 1665*)*: dé*

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Such flamboyant commemoration of a female artist again witnesses how far some women had come in their ability to inspire public fame for themselves and their art.

In a process comparable to the gathering and publishing of eulogizing verses in honor of Van Schurman and Koerten, poems in honor of Ruysch appeared in a volume of 1750, *Dichtlovers voor de uitmuntende schilderessen Mejufvrouwe Rachel Ruisch* (Poems for the excellent painter Mistress Rachel Ruysch). It included many verses, by men and women, expressing awe over Ruysch's imitative skills in the genre of still-life painting, particularly considering that she was a woman. The text also proclaims that her fame and her art will endure eternally. In Johan van Gool's biographical *De Nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstshcilders en Schilderessen* (The New Theatre of Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses, 1750) he informs us that not only was Ruysch known as an "Art Goddess," she was also called an "Art Heroine." In addition, he includes verses that further identify her as the "Amsterdam Pallas" and the "Minerva of the IJ."[77] All of these epithets indicate how profoundly the cultural memory of the seventeenth century had continually renewed the associations among all of the celebrated women of the Republic. They were viewed as heroines and Maids of Holland who had brought fame to the Fatherland and their cities via their manly deeds. They were celebrated in art and verse, and civic pride did much to enhance their legendary status.

4 Domesticity and the Dutch Maid

In addition to this discussion of wealthy and famous "Maids of Holland," it is important to include an analysis of assimilating possibilities for Dutch women as a whole. Evidence of a consistent cultural connection between the heroic warrior Maid and women generally can be found in her representation on domestic products. For example, by mid-seventeenth century she frequently decorated the surfaces of protective fire backs (Fig. 3.26). These objects of material culture would have been daily reminders to those women cooking

Friese kunstenares van de zeventiende eeuw (Leeuwarden; Ljouwert: Friese Pers Boekerij; Fries Museum, 2002), 89–92.

77 In *Dichtlovers voor de Schilderesse Mejuffrouwe Rachel Ruisch, Weduwe van Den Kunstlievenden Heere Juriaan Pool* (1750) with the contributions of several authors, the honor that Ruysch brings to Amsterdam is discussed on 6 and 21. On 22 she is called an "Art Goddess." In De *Nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders en Schilderessen* by Johan van Gool, 2 volumes (The Hague: published by the author, 1750–1751), 1:211–12 she is called an "Art Heroine" and is said to be armed with the favor of Pallas Minerva.

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at the hearth of the Dutch struggle for independence and of women's heroism in establishing this new federation. In these reliefs, a bellicose Maid in her Dutch Garden boldly grasps a lance with the Hat of Liberty at its tip. The words *Pro Patria*, or for the Fatherland, are inscribed overhead. She wears the hat of a soldier, and her fierce companionate lion has also become militarized as it brandishes a sword and clenches the seven arrows. Therefore, the continued interest in, and elaboration on, both types of heroic female themes helped to establish a unifying and epic Dutch tradition, while also engendering patriotic fervor in the founding of the new Republic – all through the figure of a woman.

Previously in the discussion of the Gouda windows, the two types of *Hollandia* were introduced: the contemporary maiden and the manly Minerva. In the former characterization, she was employed in the early decades of the seventeenth century as a patriotic allegory of the divinely blessed and economically powerful new Republic. Perhaps no print on this subject has been given more attention than the titleplate of a pamphlet from 1615 by Willem Pietersz. Buytewech (1591/1592–1624). The image bears the inscription, *Merckt de Wysheit vermaert vant Hollantsche huyshouwen en siet des luypaerts aert die niet is te vertrouwen* (Note the wisdom of renowned Dutch housekeeping and see the leopard's nature that is not to be trusted, Fig. 3.27). The pamphlet further informs us that this is an allegory on the deceitfulness of Spain and the freedom and prosperity of the Seven Provinces. First and foremost, this print has been studied as an important political signifier of the imperative to remind the Dutch citizenry about the need for unity and to warn them to be vigilant against the Spanish enemy in spite of the Twelve Years Truce.[78] *Hollandia* is once again situated in her prosperous garden where she sits under the triumphant arch of Batavian *heerschappij* (dominion). She is surrounded by the arms of the provinces and of the Prince of Orange, while being protected by the Dutch Lion. Might, Reason, and the friends of the Fatherland further aid her victory. Her two-faced Spanish enemy enviously spies on *Hollandia* and lurks with an army outside the gate.

I would assert that with such images as these, in addition to the political purposes, there are also possibilities for the female spectator to equate the Maid generally with the power of Dutch women. The juxtaposition of *Hollandia* with signifiers such as *heerschappij* (dominion) and *huyshouwen*

78 Frederik Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen; beschrijving van Nederlandsche historieplaten, zinneprenten en historische kaarten* (Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1863–1882), (note 37) nr. 1304; Egbert Haverkam-Begemann, *Willem Buytewech* (Amsterdam: H. Hertzberger, 1959), 14, 170–71; Clifford S. Ackley, *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1981), 89–91; Chapman, "*A Hollandse Pictura*," 241–42.

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FIGURE 3.26 Maid of Holland fire back, 1644, Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden

(householding) significantly recalls the pronouncements of Van Beverwijck on the import of domestic roles. He firmly asserts the importance of family and home, proclaims that the family is the fountain and origin of a republic, and states that one must augment and preserve the family as one would govern and protect a city or state. He also declares that the housewife's reliable actions lay the foundation for a well-ordered society, considers the housewife's power great, and compares her domain to a kingdom. He immediately follows this discussion with a denial that his praise of the housewife is a means to restrict women to the domestic realm. He relates that many women are able to engage in trade and business, while other women practice arts and learning. Finally, he claims that if more women were allowed such opportunities, they would be found capable of all things. Moreover, and very importantly, he claims that

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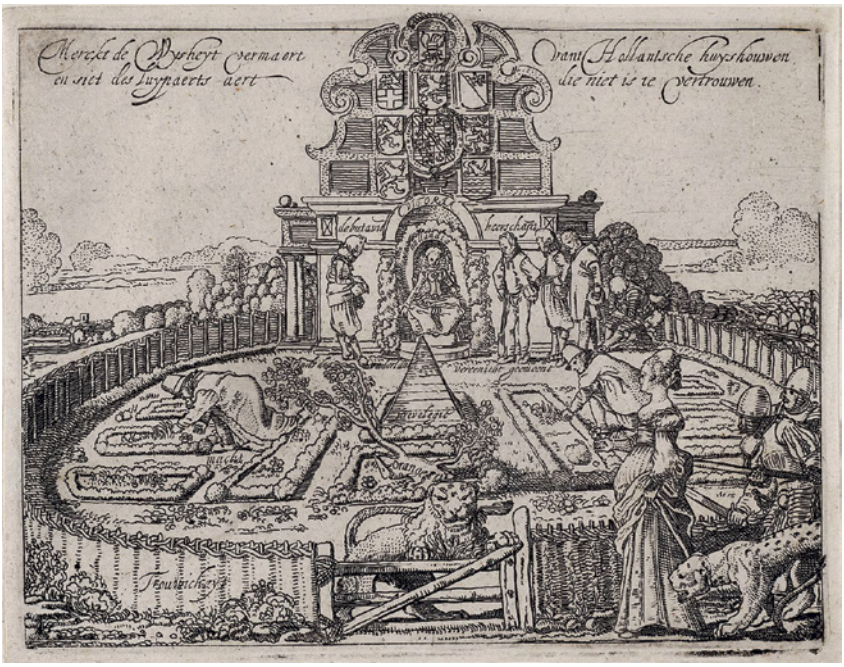

FIGURE 3.27 Willem Pietersz. Buytewech, 1615 *Allegory on the Deceitfulness of Spain and the Liberty and Prosperity of the Dutch Republic*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

the assignation of gender roles is not due to nature, but is instead a matter of habit.[79]

In this manner, the Maid became a model for women generally, whose rule over their own realms was so critical to the success of the Republic. This *heerschappij* of housewives is frequently represented in domestic genre scenes. Images of the home rarely contain fathers, and when they are present, they are usually relegated to an insignificant position, often in the background, of the composition. Women dominate these scenes and they are frequently shown instructing children, servants, and vendors in their duties. A significant example of this type of authoritarian imagery is depicted in a painting of 1663 by Quirijn van Brekelenkam (Fig. 3.28). Here the mother is enthroned in the center of the composition with children and a maidservant emulating her example and attending to her commands. The man of the household is only minimally referenced in the portrait on the back wall. It has been suggested that there is a possibility that this is a genrefied family portrait, in which case the husband's

79 Van Beverwijck, *Wtnementheyt*, 2:209–12.

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FIGURE 3.28 Quiringh van Brekelenkam, *Interior with Three Women and a Girl*, 1663, Kunsthaus, Zürich

authority has been significantly reduced in relation to the powerful position of his wife.[80] Thus, a kind of matriarchal ideal was constructed in which women reigned supreme in the domestic sphere without the interference of men.

80 León Krempel suggests that it may be a family portrait in the guise of a genre scene in "Bildnisse in Genrebildern," in *Face Book: Studies on Dutch and Flemish Portraiture of the 16th–18th Centuries: Liber Amicorum Presented to Rudolf E. O. Ekkart on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Rudolf E. O. Ekkart (Leiden; The Hague: Primavera Pers; Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2012), 351–58.

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In regards to the powerful role of the domestic matriarch, it is essential to discuss a final artistic genre that demonstrates the import of imaging heroic maids for female viewers generally. These images were created by women and girls for the home in the form of decorative samplers. Not surprisingly, the Maid of Holland became one of the most favored motifs in Dutch needlepoint during the second half of the Golden Age. In these depictions, this powerful and intrepid woman is almost always posed in the familiar hand-on-hip heroine stance within her fenced garden, as in a sampler dated 1665 by Maria Block (Fig. 3.29). Also in the manner of previous imagery, *Hollandia* wields a spear with her other hand that displays the hat of liberty. In relation to this very popular motif, it is important to recall the theoretical construct of the "subversive stitch" as Parker labeled it several years ago.[81] She suggests that meaning in needlework is culturally specific and must be examined within these contexts in order to ascertain how women both accepted and resisted patriarchal prescriptions for feminine behavior in relation to traditional women's work. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that samplers like this one were also a demonstration of the artist's literary and visual knowledge.[82] I would suggest that in displaying one's learning and in recalling famous and heroic Maids of Holland, both allegorical and real, such motifs were used as a subversive statement regarding female ability and influence in a medium to which women generally had access and with which they could communicate across domestic boundaries. Reciprocally, the constant visibility of these female-created motifs must have inspired the young woman viewer in her desire to similarly develop her own consequential identity. Like the many cultural heroines discussed, she, too, would have been responsive to this assimilating impulse as she imagined herself in a role of import. Hence, through the art of needlepoint, every woman who contributed to the glory of the Republic could visualize herself as a heroic Maid of Holland. And the avid re-representing of the glorious and

81 Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: Women's Press, 1984). Needlework in the cause of subversion and social criticism is also discussed by Heather Pristash, Inez Schaechterle, and Sue Carter Wood in "The Needle as the Pen: Intentionality, Needlework, and the Production of Alternate Discourses of Power," in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles, 1750–1950*, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 13–29; and Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, first published 2000), 134–171.

82 Bianca F. C. Calabresi, "'You sow, Ile read'" Letters and Literacies in Early Modern Samplers," in *Reading Women: Literacy, Authorship, and Culture in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, eds. Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelly (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 79–103.

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FIGURE 3.29 Maria Block, *Sampler*, detail of the Maid of Holland, 1665, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, Amsterdam

inspirational Maid by females throughout the Republic is witness to both the adulatory and emulative impulses of the Dutch spectatrix.

In light of these heroic associations with Dutch female culture generally, a credible analysis of the visual arts produced in the Golden Age cannot ignore the public visibility these works provided for women. Clearly, such reimaging of strong females figured large in the discourse over the nature and significance of women. These images emphasized the importance of women in all their roles for the well-being, and even survival, of the society. Through participation in public discourse, such depictions surely bestowed a demonstrable degree of power on women generally.

5 Theorizing the Dutch Spectatrix

While I am certain that my assertions of female agency and power as modeled after the Maid of Holland will meet with skepticism amongst some art

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historians, it should be remembered from the introduction that recent scholarship on early modern women has led to a much more nuanced sense of female agency. The many instances of female autonomy that have been discovered provide significant evidence of women's impact on cultural development. Habermas's redefining of the public sphere in the early modern era, for example, has allowed for the possibility of feminist interventions into that realm that did not previously exist. He asserts that by the eighteenth century the bourgeois public sphere was firmly developed, via the press, as well as reading societies, salons, and coffee houses.[83] Some feminists note that this model allowed women to influence the public sphere in informal ways via literary and artistic discussions.[84]

In relation to this article, several historians have suggested that the formation of a bourgeois public sphere began even earlier in the Dutch Republic.[85] In fact, some see this society as one marked by constant debate in which all segments of the population were able to participate.[86] The discussions of

83 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991, originally published in 1962).

84 Several feminist scholars of eighteenth-century Europe have argued for a patriarchal view of this model including: Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); Johanna Meehan, ed. *Feminists Read Habermas: Gendering the Subject of Discourse* (NewYork: Routledge, 1995); Kathleen Wilson, "Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c. 1720–1790," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29 (1995): 69–96; Margaret C. Jacob, "The Mental Landscape of the Public Sphere: A European Perspective," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994): 95–113. For the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, Heide de Mare has particularly set forth a firm boundary between "House/street, inside/outside, pure/impure, female/male …" in "The Domestic Boundary as Ritual Area in Seventeenth-Century Holland," in *Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands: Historical Contrasts in the Use of Public Space, Architecture, and the Urban Environment*, eds. Heidi de Mare and Anna Vos (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1993): 109–131. Scholars who argue against this kind of patriarchal hegemony in the eighteenth century include: Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime," *History and Theory* 31(1) (1992): 1–20; Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg, eds., *Reconsidering the Bluestockings* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2003).

85 Frijhoff and Spies assert that a public sphere existed in the Republic in which both men and women were allowed to participate through the products of print culture and the organization of social groups, *Dutch Culture*, chapter 3. Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude also assert that the Republic had a modern, bourgeois economy in *The First Modern Economy*.

86 See various contributions to Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair*

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women, as well as men, are often reflected in the various forms of printed text and image of the era.[87] Also, literary and cultural societies, which included women, were established to discuss public concerns and ideas. In addition, women were involved in the producing and consuming of art in this middle-class society, which further aided their participation in structuring the new public sphere. For Habermas, the creation of an art for the people meant that now private individuals would be determining the meaning of these products through their own discussion.[88] In this manner, the art purchased and created by the Dutch spectatrix could engage in the structuring of public gender identity without necessarily conforming to the patriarchal ideologies of much prescriptive literature.

As previously discussed, recent scholarship has turned away from earlier patriarchal models that sharply contrasted male and female experience historically. Nevertheless, in art historical studies of the Dutch Golden Age, there has been less enthusiasm for this revisionist approach. For example, at the very moment when early modern historians were rejecting the oppressive public/private paradigm of the past, historians of Dutch art were embracing it.[89] These analyses agreed for the most part that a rather firm boundary existed between the public and the private with women relegated to the domestic realm under the control of patriarchy. In addition, as asserted by Westermann in her 2002 state of the research survey of Dutch art historical studies, the introduction of gender theory was having little impact on the field.[90] Therefore, the contention that women artists and patrons acted autonomously to overcome gender biases and create public, powerful reputations for themselves in a proto-feminist manner has previously met with, and will probably continue

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Duke (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), especially Andrew Sawyer, "Medium and Message. Political Prints in the Dutch Republic, 1568–1632," 163–187.

87 Frijhoff and Spies illustrate this attention to female discourse in *Dutch Culture*, 223.

88 Habermas, *The Public Sphere*, 37.

89 Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr. and Adele F. Seeff, eds., *The Public and the Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age* (Newark; London: University of Delaware Press; Associated University Presses, 2000); Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., Michiel Plomp, Daniëlle H. A. C. Lokin, and Quint Gregory, eds., *The Public and the Private in the Age of Vermeer* (London; Wappingers Falls, NY: P. Wilson; Distributed in the USA and Canada by Antique Collectors's Club, 2000); Martha Hollander, *An entrance for the eye: space and meaning in seventeenth-century Dutch art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Elizabeth Alice Honig, "Desire and Domestic Economy," *Art Bulletin* 83, no. 2 (2001): 294–315.

90 Mariët Westermann "After Iconography and Iconoclasm: Current Research in Netherlandish Art, 1566–1700," *The Art Bulletin*, 84, no. 2 (2002): 351–372.

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to meet with, resistance from several scholars.[91] Nevertheless, it is important to recall the embattled language of some of these women. They were obviously aware of the patriarchal construction of their societies, and their agenda reveals an early feminist strategy of celebrating the public accomplishments of women, of declaring women to be equal with men in their capabilities, and of encouraging other women to fight against certain traditional gender boundaries. Van Schurman's earlier quoted call to arms is particularly illuminating in this regard:

> You bear the arms of Pallas, bold heroine in battles …
> Thus it is fitting for you to make a defence for the innocent sex
> And to turn the weapons of harmful men against them.

These are the words of a woman consciously choosing to exert her agency to make women the intellectual and social equals of men. Furthermore, the demonstrated adulation of this woman by her female contemporaries suggests that they too must have desired some of this same autonomy. And finally, the constant visibility of a strong female archetype that conjured up both allegorical and actual cultural memories in domestic material culture suggests that women generally, not just female elites, were engaged in a constant reaffirming of consequential female influence and power in this society.

In most studies of Netherlandish art, however, there is an assumption that only men were capable of such individualistic behavior and free will in Dutch society. This hyperbolized sense of male autonomy has led to a very slanted perspective. Clearly, in certain instances of female fashioning, women were also innovatively attempting to construct public images for themselves that would promote them individually, but also the female sex as a whole. However, it was not only women viewers that were affected by these shifting definitions of female identity. As more Dutch women were integrated into the pantheon of allegorical and mythological heroines, it helped to alter views regarding female significance among both sexes. As a result, men of the era could also imagine a society where women were capable of attaining "manly" virtues such as bravery, intelligence, and artistic skill. So while many discussions of gendered gaze focus on biology, I have argued that spectators in this society were culturally

91 The term proto-feminist refers to the existence of seventeenth-century pro-female ideologies that foreshadowed actual "feminism" of the modern era. This term is used to describe the writings of Renaissance pro-female authors in Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr., "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: Introduction to the Series," in *The Worth of Women* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

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constructed. Therefore, males did not constitute a monolithic entity that persistently saw women in a negative or subservient light. Indeed, the positive fashioning of female identity as influenced by Maid of Holland imagery was greatly enhanced by the contributions of male authors and artists, as they too subverted traditional gender norms by remarkably praising women and their accomplishments in both the public and private spheres.

But perhaps more importantly, I have argued that the Dutch Republic was a society in which this type of imagining was particularly enhanced for women through the constant visualization of the heroic *Hollandia* and her heiresses. With this recovery of an autonomous spectatrix, there is still recognition that while the position it propounds may not have triumphed over patriarchy in some political and social ways, it was not without the ability to influence cultural opinions regarding female identity. Consequently, Dutch patriarchy was constantly being tempered by a discourse that was sympathetic to powerful women and that accorded them value, thus enhancing the agency of women to envisage themselves in roles that appreciably revolutionized their position in society.

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CHAPTER 4

The Absent Made Present: Portraying Nuns in the Early Modern Low Countries

Margit Thøfner

Over the recent decades scholarly work on early modern nuns has truly taken off, a happy consequence of the general growth of interest in gender history. Nuns have been studied in terms of their social and political lives, their devotional and musical practices, their artistic and architectural patronage and much else besides.[1] There is nevertheless something of a lacuna in this burgeoning field: portraiture.[2] To my knowledge there are only two authors who have engaged directly with the portrayal of early modern nuns, James Córdova and Mónica Díaz, and they focus exclusively on New Spain and New France.[3] Of course, there are also useful broader surveys of conventual visual culture such as Paul Vandenbroeck's justifiably famous and methodologically provocative exhibition catalogue of 1994, *Hooglied/Le Jardin clos d'âme*.[4] This

1 This body of literature is far too large to enumerate here but good examples include: Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life, 1450–1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Robert L. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and their Music in Early Modern Milan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); Benjamin Paul, *Nuns and Reform Art in Early Modern Venice: The Architecture of Santi Cosma e Damiano and its Decoration from Tintoretto to Tiepolo* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Cordula van Wyhe, ed., *Female Monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Claire Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe: English Convents in France and the Low Countries*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003); Charlotte Woodford, *Nuns as Historians in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

2 For example, it is a striking absence in this otherwise excellent volume: Andrea Pearson, ed., *Women and Portraits in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

3 James M. Córdova, "Clad in Flowers: Indigenous Arts and Knowledge in Colonial Mexican Convents," *Art Bulletin* 93 (2011): 449–467; James M. Córdova, *The Art of Professing in Bourbon Mexico: Crowned-Nun Portraits and Reform in the Convent* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 148–172; Mónica Díaz, "Native American Women and Religion in the American Colonies: Textual and Visual Traces of an Imagined Community," *Legacy* 28 (2011): 205–231. Although focused on a triptych and a diptych from the early sixteenth century, useful points are also made in Andrea G. Pearson, "Nuns, Images, and the Ideals of Women's Monasticism: Two Paintings from the Cistercian Convent of Flines," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 1356–1402.

4 Paul Vandenbroeck, ed, *Hooglied. De beeldwereld van religieuze vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden vanaf de 13e eeuw* (Brussels and Ghent; Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, 1994);

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catalogue helpfully includes a number of southern Netherlandish portraits of nuns although they are not discussed in any detail in the text. In addition, historians like Silvia Evangelisti and Sarah Moran have made thoughtful comments on the portrayal of religious women within broader discussions of life and visual culture in convents and beguinages.[5] But, to date, there has been no dedicated study focusing sharply in on this particular body of early modern pictorial practices.

Accordingly, this essay is a first exploration of the problems and issues that come into play when considering portraits of early modern nuns. Due to its preliminary nature, the discussion is divided into four sections, a pair on faces and then a pair on places. The first of these four sections is an attempt to define the area of study and also to explore its limits. The second examines the making of nuns' portraits whilst the third and fourth explore two of their distinct historical functions, one familial, the other conventual. It should be underscored that, as a whole, the present essay is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, merely an attempt to stimulate further interest in an important and challenging body of historical and art-historical evidence.

1 Faces (1): Definitions, Limits and Pictorial Problems

First there is the question of what constitutes an early modern nun. It is easiest to focus on those who inhabited the strict enclosure generally enforced after the Council of Trent and this, indeed, is what most of the present essay does but purely for reasons of length and manageability. It must be stressed that, especially in the Netherlands, there were many less formalised groups of devout women, including spiritual daughters, beguines and klopjes, who lived religious lives without taking formal vows and thus were not subject to claustration. Equally, there were hospital sisters whose caring for the sick meant that enclosure could only ever be partial. Moreover, in the seventeenth

Paul Vandenbroeck, ed, *Le Jardin clos de l'âme* (Brussels and Ghent: Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, 1994). All subsequent references are to the Dutch version.

5 Evangelisti, *Nuns*, 170–174; Sarah J. Moran, "Women at Work: Governance and Financial Administration at the Court Beguinages of the Southern Low Countries in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Early Modern History* 22 (2018): forthcoming and Sarah J. Moran, *Visual Culture at the Court Beguinages of the Habsburg Low Countries: Unconventual Women 1585–1794*, Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming. I am very grateful to Sarah Moran for permitting me access to her important article and the equally insightful relevant chapter of her book in their unpublished form.

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century there came the new female teaching orders, for example the Ursulines, who quickly learned to work both with and against claustration.[6]

Second, there are problems of geography. On the basis of exhaustive work on profession and other conventual portraits from New Spain, Córdova has argued that the specific forms taken by these images are a relatively local phenomenon, pertaining to certain Hispanic colonies (for an example of such a profession portrait, see Fig. 4.1).[7] Whether this is really so requires further exploration but Córdova nevertheless raises an important point: one should be careful about how to delimit the study of early modern nuns' portraits. Present-day geographical, political or linguistic boundaries will not suffice. This is particularly the case for the early modern Netherlands, which were tightly bound into the Hispano-Portuguese Empire, whether as subjects or sworn enemies.[8]

In fact, in the early modern world, portraits of nuns and female novices were simultaneously a local and an international phenomenon – a type of imagery produced all over the Roman Catholic world, ranging from the Netherlands, France, Spain and Italy through to the so-called New World (for examples, see Figs. 4.1–4.7). That, in turn, is because of the para-national nature of much of early modern monasticism. A community of, say, Benedictine or Augustinian or Carmelite nuns were most certainly defined by their specific location but also by their province and their allegiance to the Superiors of their respective Orders, usually resident in Rome. And there was normally a lively correspondence between the three and sometimes nuns and their superiors would travel long distances, for example to found new communities or to support established ones that had run into trouble.[9] Less strictly defined sisters in religion,

6 A good overview of the various types of female orders to be found in the early modern Netherlands may be gained from Craig Harline, "Actives and Contemplatives: The Female Religious of the Low Countries before and after Trent," *The Catholic Historical Review* 81 (1995): 541–567. On the spiritual daughters, individual lay women under Jesuit direction, see Ellen A. Macek, "*Ghostly Fathers* and Their *Virtuous Daughters*: The Role of Spiritual Direction in the Lives of Three Early Modern English Women," *The Catholic Historical Review* 90 (2004): 213–235; on beguines, see Moran, "Women at Work"; on klopjes, see Joke Spaans, *De Levens der Maechden: Het Verhaal van een Religieuze Vrouwengemeenschap in de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2012).

7 Córdova, "Clad in Flowers," 449–467; Córdova, *The Art of Professing in Bourbon Mexico*, 148–172.

8 This, of course, follows the thesis expounded by Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World, 1606–1661* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982).

9 Consider, for example, the journeys made by Ana de Jesus, a close friend of St Teresa of Avila and foundress of Discalced Carmelite convents in Spain, France and the Low Countries. [Anna of Jesus of Notre Dame de Namur], *Life of the Venerable Anne of Jesus, Companion of St. Teresa of Avila* (London: Sands, [1932]), 60–71, 94, 130–131, 168–229. See also I. Rosier,

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FIGURE 4.1 Anonymous, *Ana Maria de la Preciosa Sangre de Cristo*, c. 1770. Denver Art Museum, Denver

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FIGURE 4.2 Sofonisba Anguissola, *Elena Anguissola*, 1551, City Art Gallery, Southampton

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FIGURE 4.3 Diego Velazquez, *Jeronima de la Fuente*, 1620, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

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FIGURE 4.4 Attributed to Jean-Francois de Troy, *Anne Stonor*, c. 1725, Stonor Park, Oxfordshire

such as beguines, were even freer to travel.[10] In short, early modern monasticism was a geographically fluid phenomenon and, in acknowledgement of that, what follows is not confined strictly to the Netherlands.

Biographisch en Bibliographisch overzicht van de vroomheid in de Nederlandse Carmel van 1235 tot het midden der achttiende eeuw (Tielt: Lannoo, 1950), 159–160.

10 See, for example, the ease with which beguines from Antwerp travelled back and forth to visit the Premonstratensian nuns of Oosterhout: Trees Sponselee-de Meester, *Het Norbertinessenklooster Sint-Catharinadal in de Staatse periode 1625–1795: portret van een religieuze vrouwengemeenschap in benarde tijden* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2003), 171–173. See also Moran, *Visual Culture at the Court Beguinages*, forthcoming.

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Third, there is the issue of anonymity. Many surviving early modern portraits of nuns are difficult to anchor historically because either sitter or artist or both remain stubbornly unknowable. That, in turn, is often a stumbling block to serious art-historical investigation; as a discipline, we are not good at valuing and otherwise engaging with unnamed works. Consider, for example, the provenance of one portrait of a Carmelite novice, chosen more or less at random (Fig. 4.5). It seems that the existence of this painting was only registered publicly when it passed through the London art market in 2008, tentatively attributed to Philippe de Champaigne. Trained in Brussels, de Champaigne spent most of his working life in France where he did indeed produce elegantly understated portraits of nuns, perhaps in part because his only daughter Catherine was a Cistercian at Port-Royal in Paris.[11] The attribution, however, was based more on wishful thinking than on proper engagement with the painting. In 2011 the portrait went through the art market again and, as an attentive conservator then noticed, it is actually signed by one Pieter Leermans and dated 1678. Leermans is a rather obscure painter from Leiden, possibly a pupil of Gerard Dou.[12] So at least this portrait now comes with a distinct Netherlandish context but it has not yet been possible to identify the sitter although the coat of arms may eventually yield something. It does not help that the portrait has yet again disappeared into private ownership.

Such intractably anonymous images regularly go through the art market where they fetch relatively low prices and then disappear into private collections. This is one symptom of the systematic erosion of monasticism in the Netherlands that began with Joseph II's dissolution of contemplative communities and which is still continuing under the twin pressures of secularisation and capitalism.[13] From a historical point of view, it is unfortunate because it compromises our ability to study the role that portraiture played in early modern monastic culture.

Besides this, even when the portrait is associated with a well-known artist, for example somebody like Peter Paul Rubens, it can be difficult to identify the sitter. For many years there was doubt about the identity of the nun in the

11 On the relationship between de Champaigne and the nuns of Port Royal, see Olin D. Rand, "Philippe de Champaigne and the *Ex-Voto* of 1662: A Historical Perspective," *Art Bulletin* 65 (1983): 78–92.

12 Hans Volmer, ed., *Allgemeines Lexicon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (*begründet von Ulrich Thieme und Felix Becker*) (Leipzig: Seeman, 1928), vol. 22, 546. The fact that Leermans can only be found in Thieme-Becker evinces his obscurity.

13 Harline, "Actives and Contemplatives," 558 and 564. Further insights may be gained from Urs Altermatt, Jan de Mayer and Franziska Metzger, eds., *Religious Institutes and Catholic Culture in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2014).

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FIGURE 4.5 Pieter Leermans, *Portrait of a Carmelite Novice*, 1678, present whereabouts unknown

portrait at Apsley House (Fig. 4.6). It was only when a sharp-eyed art historian noted an explicitly named copy in the *Descalzas Reales* in Madrid that the sitter was finally named as Ana Dorotea of Habsburg, the illegitimate daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II.[14] So, as demonstrated by the three examples discussed so far, getting scholarly purchase on nuns' portraits is not

14 Frances Huemer, *Portraits I – Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part XIX* (Brussels: Arcade Press, 1977), 101–102.

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FIGURE 4.6 Peter Paul Rubens, *Ana Dorotea of Habsburg*, 1628, Apsley House, London

easy. Amongst other things, it involves careful visual analysis and a honed knowledge of cognate examples. It may be that the latter can only be fully acquired by constructing an extensive catalogue or database of such images but that is beyond the scope of this essay.

As all this suggests, studying early modern nuns' portraits can be frustrating. In essence, they are highly conventional.[15] The format is usually bust or

15 Of course, there are conventional aspects to be found in most early modern European portraiture. See Joanna Woodall, "Introduction: facing the subject" in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press,

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half-length, great attention is paid to the fall of the veil and the voluminous habit, the facial features are often quite generic, and one or both hands are demurely folded across the body or else hold some suitable devotional accoutrement. If there is additional detail it is usually devotional paraphernalia like skulls, books, crucifixes, rosaries or a combination of these. Frankly, the iconography is somewhat tedious and the overall quality frequently less than satisfactory. In short, nuns' portraits often come with limited contextual documentation and in visual terms there is also little to work with.

Even so, for a number of reasons it is important to engage with this type of portraiture. One has already been clearly articulated by Silvia Evangelisti, for whom portraits "confirmed the nuns' intermediate position between heaven and earth, though firmly asserting their roots in their family and the terrestrial community."[16] Whilst she does not offer any detailed analysis of specific portraits to substantiate this point, it is at least a start. For, as Evangelisti suggests, without the study of nuns' portraits we miss a vital form of historical evidence pertaining to their lives, to their particular combination of religious and social roles. And there are also more specific art-historical reasons for studying nuns' portraits. These images constitute an overtly gendered sub-genre of portraiture – something that is already implied by their uniformity, their frustrating conventionality. They take us to the heart of what it meant to portray women in the early modern Netherlands.

The gendered qualities of nuns' portraits become obvious when compared with images of monks or friars. Consider, for example, the differences between Rubens's painting of Ana Dorotea and his portrait of the Dominican friar Michael Ophovius (Figs. 4.6 and 4.7). Ophovius, as is fitting for a provincial of the Order of Preachers, is shown with his mouth slightly open as if speaking directly to the viewer, whilst also addressing us with his gaze and hands.[17] At the same time, the lower parts of his body are modestly sheltered by the drawing of his mantle across it, surely an allusion to clerical celibacy yet equally evocative of a cerebral as opposed to physical personality. Even so, on balance, Ophovius's portrait comes with a sense of bodily openness quite different from the self-enclosing pose that Rubens gave to Ana Dorotea. Her gaze also addresses the audience but her body, apart from her face and hands, is enfolded in her voluminous Franciscan habit. Furthermore, the view to

1997), 1–25, especially 2. What seems to be distinct about nuns' portraits is their unusually high degree of conventionality.

16 Evangelisti, *Nuns*, 175.

17 Hans Vlieghe, *Portraits II, Antwerp: Identified Sitters – Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part XIX* (London: Harvey Miller, 1987), 139–142.

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FIGURE 4.7 Peter Paul Rubens, *Michiel Ophovius*, c. 1615–17, Mauritshuis, The Hague

her stomach is virtually obscured by the book and rosary beads held in her drawn-in hands. Whilst Ophovius's hands address us, Ana Dorotea's turn in on herself in what seems a protective, even apotropaic gesture. For the nun, the allusion to chastity is much more overt; she is, quite literally, enclosing herself, simultaneously emphasising and withholding her physicality. Thus these two

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portraits come with quite distinct pictorial concerns. In them, Rubens – ever sensitive to the relationship between gender and pictorial decorum as well as to existing visual conventions – formulates two distinct pictorial personae. One is masculine and cerebral, appropriate for a Dominican academic, preacher and provincial, the other feminine and far more emphatically virginal, for a cloistered nun of the Imperial bloodline.

The most striking difference between the two is the covering of Ana Dorotea's head and hair, which in any case would have been shorn. Of course this was a standard monastic requirement for women. Nevertheless, it poses distinct problems for portrait painters. Unable to convey the texture and colour of hair, it compromises somewhat their ability to evoke individual presence, maybe one reason for our frequent inability to identify female monastic sitters. In Ana Dorotea's case, as in several of the examples discussed in this essay, that problem is exacerbated by the emphasis on her pale and youthful skin. It does not have the wrinkles, puckered brow and other distinguishing characteristics that Rubens worked across the friar's visage – although this is countered, to an extent, by the unusually large, slightly protuberant eyes. As a whole, Ana Dorotea's face is carefully balanced between a relatively recognisable likeness and a generic early modern ideal of youthful feminine beauty (a pictorial tension also observable in Figs. 4.2, 4.4, and 4.5 and, indeed, to be found in many early modern portraits of women). That is to say: portraying early modern nuns came with a set of gender-specific pictorial problems, distinct from those pertaining to painting male religious.

This both confirms and expands Evangelisti's point: nuns' portraits divulge a great deal about how gendered identities were articulated and perpetuated visually in the early modern period. Given this, they surely need to be studied in more detail despite their attendant problems. For they help to illuminate the contradictions and paradoxes inherent in the lives of early modern nuns, especially but not exclusively of the cloistered variety. More broadly, it is important to remember that, at least in the southern Netherlands, to be a cloistered nun or hospital sister or beguine was to take on a socially important yet distinctly gendered personal role; monastic life was a real alternative for women who did not wish to become wives or mothers.[18] Because of this nuns' portraits are, quite simply, important facets of gender history.

One final caveat: this essay deliberately eschews various categories of conventual portraiture, including printed works, group portraits and portraits set

18 Harline, "Actives and Contemplatives," especially 565–567. See also Tine de Moor, "Single, safe, and sorry? Explaining the early modern beguine movement in the Low Countries," *Journal of Family History* 39 (2014): 3–21.

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within broader narrative or devotional scenes. This is not to imply that such images are unimportant or unrelated to the topic in hand – they most certainly are, and deserve more and deeper study. But, for the sake of brevity, most of the present argument focuses on paintings where one single religious woman is portrayed as a distinct person – or rather as a *persona* – as an individual who embodies a particular social and religious ideal: that of the impeccably virtuous and chaste nun.

2 Faces (II): Painting Portraits

Now, to take early modern nuns' portraits seriously as historical evidence entails considering how and why they were made. The first point to be made here is that the making of a portrait usually involved some form of financial transaction. Most paintings of nuns were paid for either by the sitter herself or by somebody else desirous of owning her image; it is generally the case that female portraits of the early modern period were as likely to be paid for by relatives or admirers as by the sitter herself.[19] This is clear, for example, from the account book kept by the German artist Albrecht Dürer while visiting the Low Countries. In Antwerp in November 1520 he drew a portrait (his own term: "conterfet") of a nun and, as part of the process, he gave to her community "7 weiszpfennig" and three engravings, probably of his own making.[20] This is particularly intriguing because normally Dürer would not pay but rather charge one Philip guilder for a drawn portrait. Yet in this case the customer was the artist himself.

Because of this, and despite of his phrase "conterfet", Dürer's drawing is more likely to have been a kind of *tronie*, a careful study of an individual face made and kept by the artist with the aim of adapting it for a character in a future image. If that is so, the nun sat for Dürer because he thought she had an interesting face that would help him visualise, perhaps, that of a female saint.[21] As was reasonable, he paid his sitter, not the reverse, because he got to keep the portrait. From the nun's point of view, it must have seemed an easy way of

19 Often portraits of women were commissioned by husbands, male relatives or lovers but affluent women certainly also commissioned portraits of themselves and their families. For a sense of the wide range of patrons and motivations behind the making of portraits of both men and women, see Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait-Painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 139, 141–142, 144–145 and 193–218.

20 Jan G. van Gelder, "*Sister Metzgen*, a Portrait by Dürer," *Master Drawings* 9 (1971): 154–159.

21 Van Gelder, "*Sister Metzgen*," 158.

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FIGURE 4.8 Albrecht Dürer, *Metzgen and an older woman*, c. 1520, Musée Condé, Chantilly

earning a bit of money and garnering some nice pictures for her community. So it was still a fairly straightforward exchange of money for artistic labour and subsequent ownership of the resulting image; and that must have been so for most early modern nuns' portraits. Even so, there is one extant Netherlandish example demonstrating that the transaction could be devotional as well as financial, a group portrait of Augustinian nuns with the clear injunction "By God's will, pray for the painter of this …".[22]

It may be that Dürer's drawing still survives (Fig. 4.8). If the young veiled woman on the left with downcast eyes is indeed the Antwerp nun that he portrayed, the artist's inscription identifies her as Metzgen, a diminutive of Matilde or Mechtild.[23] The drawing certainly fits with Dürer's own sense of what makes a portrait. In it, he attended with exaggerated care to Metzgen's features, delineating uneven brows, a neat but slightly bulbous nose, full lips and somewhat chubby chin. At the same time, her demurely lowered gaze

22 "Om Gods Wil bidt voor den Schilder deser […]" (my ellipsis). Vandenbroeck, *Hooglied*, 256 (catalogue no. 201).

23 Van Gelder, "*Sister Metzgen*," 156.

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and general features may perhaps be detected in certain later drawings where Dürer depicts St Anne and the Virgin Mary.[24] It is also worth noting that, either before or after drawing Metzgen, Dürer deliberately juxtaposed her face with that of a much older woman in similar garb, exploring the contrast between a youthful and a mature female face.

If this drawing is indeed of a nun named Metzgen and if it is that referenced in Dürer's account book, the work bears witness to a rather charged portrait encounter, at least if viewed through the lens of early modern sexual morality. In return for payment, a young Antwerp nun permits a traveller from Nuremberg – a married man perilously far from home – to gaze intently at her face, intently enough to delineate her features in detail. Of course, Dürer was a virtuoso draughtsman as well as an acute businessman and so would have worked with despatch.[25] But it would still have taken time to set out in metalpoint the soft shading of her cheeks and the delicate folds in her headdress; the precise nature of the drawing implies a fairly prolonged sitting.

In any case the entry in Dürer's account book implies that a close portrait encounter between a nun and a visiting male artist was still possible in the early 1520s. Such transactions must have become rather more problematic after the Council of Trent's clamour for the strict enclosure of nuns in 1563. It is worth quoting the relevant passage at length, to convey its emphatic tone:

> The holy Synod [...] enjoins on all bishops [...] that, by their ordinary authority, in all monasteries subject to them, and in others, by the authority of the Apostolic See, they make it their especial care, that the enclosure of nuns be carefully restored, wheresoever it has been violated, and that it be preserved, wheresoever it has not been violated; repressing, by ecclesiastical censures and other penalties, without regarding any appeal whatsoever, the disobedient and gainsayers, and calling in for this end, if need be, the aid of the Secular arm. [....] But for no nun, after her profession, shall it be lawful to go out of her convent, even for a brief period, under any pretext whatever, except for some lawful cause, which is to be approved of by the bishop; any indults and privileges whatsoever notwithstanding.
>
> And it shall not be lawful for any one, of whatsoever birth, or condition, sex, or age, to enter within the enclosure of a nunnery, without the permission of the bishop, or of the Superior, obtained in writing, under

24 Van Gelder, "*Sister Metzgen*," 158.

25 A good sense of Dürer's business acumen may be gained from Jane C. Hutchison, *Albrecht Dürer: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 97–105 and *passim*.

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> the pain of excommunication to be *ipso facto* incurred. But the bishop, or the Superior ought to grant this permission in necessary cases only; nor shall any other person be able by any means to grant it, even by virtue of any faculty, or indult, already granted, or that may hereafter be granted.[26]

As far as Trent was concerned, nuns should stay within their convents. Any contact with the outside world should be carefully regulated; the Council evidently thought that female chastity was easily compromised. After Trent, at least in theory, cloistered nuns could only engage actively with those of the outside world through the grille in their parlour.[27] In turn, this must have made portrait encounters between nuns and male artists rather more complicated than that between Dürer and the Antwerp nun, even if it is possible to observe a face carefully through a convent grille. Perhaps this is one reason why Rubens took such care to convey chastity in his portrait of Ana Dorotea (Fig. 4.6).

As is well known, and as noted in the introduction to this volume, in practice enclosure varied enormously and, by extension, this must also have applied to conventual portrait encounters. Of course, beguines and klopjes were never formally enclosed. Moreover, some formally professed nuns bluntly refused to accept claustration, claiming it a new-fangled imposition.[28] Others deliberately circumvented it, sometimes in amazingly brave (or foolhardy, depending on one's attitude to risk) and ingenious ways, whilst others again embraced it as a special path to virtue and sanctity.[29] The sheer diversity of how religious women dealt with enclosure is one small but very clear example

26 J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., *The Council of Trent: The Twenty-Fifth Session. The canons and decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), 240–242 (my ellipses).

27 For a thorough and helpful discussion of how Trent impacted on convent architecture in Naples, see Helen Hills, "The Veiled Body: Within the Folds of Early Modern Neapolitan Convent Architecture," *Oxford Art Journal* 27 (2004): 271–290 and also Helen Hills, *Invisible City: the architecture of devotion in seventeenth-century Neapolitan convents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

28 The tensions inherent in the coming of claustration are admirably described in Elizabeth A. Lehfeldt, "Discipline, Vocation and Patronage: Spanish Religious Women in a Tridentine Microclimate," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30 (1999): 1009–30 and also in Silvia Evangelisti, 'Art and the Advent of Clausura: The Convent of Saint Catherine of Siena in Tridentine Florence' in *Suor Plautilla Nelli, 1523–1588: First Woman Painter of Florence*, ed. Jonathan Nelson (Florence: Cadmo, 2000), 67–82.

29 An excellent and wonderfully entertaining account of just how daring and inventive nuns could be when trying to circumvent enclosure is Craig Monson, *Nuns Behaving Badly: Tales of Music, Magic, Art, and Arson in the Convents of Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

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of the complex issues surrounding female agency in the early modern period, as discussed in the present volume by Martha Howell.

In general, the Discalced Carmelite nuns embraced enclosure. They were one of the most prestigious female orders in the early modern southern Netherlands, whence they had been invited by the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia. Their first foundation was next to her palace in Brussels and the nuns generally came from local elite families.[30] It is also worth noting that, when this group of nuns moved from their temporary home into their convent by the Brussels palace in 1611, they processed heavily veiled, deliberately shielding their faces and bodies from any curious or impertinent gazes from the general public.[31] At least in the post-Tridentine southern Netherlands, St. Teresa's daughters served as an important benchmark for female monastic virtue and, as the Brussels sisters ostentatiously demonstrated in 1611, they observed strict enclosure. It is unlikely that any of them would have deigned to unveil their faces simply to help a male artist envisage sanctity.

That said, the visibility of cloistered nuns' faces varied considerably. This is apparent from a travel description penned in 1663 by the young English botanist Philip Skippon, son of a Puritan military officer. Skippon avidly recorded the exact amount of visual contact he was permitted in the convents of France and the Low Countries. For example, in Gravelines he noted that the English Franciscan nuns "live very strictly, and never see the face of any man; the bars were of iron that we discours'd through."[32] In Dunkirk, he also visited the English Franciscan sisters: "we went into their chapel, and then through a wooden grate we had liberty to see one or two of them in their habits, but would not discover their faces."[33] The English Benedictines of the same city were less strict: "being admitted into a parlour, a curtain was drawn, and we had freedom to see and discourse with the ladies; about five or six giving us the entertainment of their company through an iron grate".[34]

Despite these variations it remains safe to assume that, in the post-Tridentine period, in certain contexts it was problematic for male artists

30 For a general account of the Infanta Isabella's engagement with this order, see Angel Manrique, *La Venerable Madre Ana de Iesus* (Brussels: Lucas de Meerbeeck, 1632), 65–79 (second order of pagination) and *passim*.

31 Manrique, *La Venerable Madre Ana*, 78 (second order of pagination).

32 Philip Skippon, 'An account of a journey made thro' part of the Low-Countries, Germany, Italy and France,' in *A collection of voyages and travels, some now printed from original manuscripts, others now first published in English …*, (London: Printed by assignment from Messrs. Churchill, 1732), 362. My thanks to Sarah Moran for drawing this wonderful source to my attention.

33 Skippon, 'An account', 362.

34 Skippon, 'An account', 363.

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FIGURE 4.9 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Adoration of the Eucharist*, c. 1626, Art Institute, Chicago

to portray cloistered nuns. Further circumstantial evidence comes from a poignant sketch in which Rubens tried to visualise from his home in Antwerp how his tapestry designs would work in the convent of the *Descalzas Reales* in Madrid (Fig. 4.9).[35] At the centre there is a grille; through it one glimpses the ghostly outline of a Franciscan nun. It may be that this spectral nun is somehow related to Rubens's memories of painting Ana Dorotea in Madrid nearly a decade earlier (Fig. 4.6); she was, after all, a member of the strictly enclosed *Descalzas Reales*. Although this is perhaps a little fanciful, Rubens's tapestry sketch is suggestive of the practical difficulties involved in having to gaze through a grille at a heavily veiled cloistered nun with the expectation of producing a functioning likeness. In addition, Rubens's Catholic faith surely

35 Nora de Poorter, *The Eucharist Series – Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part II* (London: Harvey Miller, 1978), vol. 1, 258–262.

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bade him respect a nun's vow of chastity and, by extension, her right not to be subjected to unnecessarily extensive male scrutiny; a right that, as Skippon noted, was fiercely defended by her Franciscan sisters in Gravelines and Dunkirk.[36] That is to say, Rubens's portrait encounter with Ana Dorotea may have felt discomfiting for both.

For cloistered nuns the problem was much less intense if the portraitist was a close male relative, as in the case of de Champaigne's portraits of his daughter Catherine at Port-Royal. He was also permitted to paint the abbess, Angélique Arnauld, despite her well-known inflexible attitude to contact between her nuns and their male relatives and her more general mistrust of men.[37] This indicates that a male artist might more easily have access to conventual portraiture if he had a female family member within the walls.

On the other hand, not all early modern portrait painters were men; some of them were even nuns themselves. This included Louise-Hollandine of the Palatinate, Abbess of the Cistercians at Maubuisson near Paris, who in childhood had been taught to draw by Gerard van Honthorst (Fig. 4.10).[38] Admittedly, Louise-Hollandine was in many ways exceptional. The daughter of Frederick, Count Palatine, and Princess Elizabeth Stuart, she had been raised a Calvinist in The Hague and was first received into the Roman Catholic faith in the convent of the English Discalced Carmelites in Antwerp in 1658. Like Queen Christina of Sweden, she was a trophy convert with a range and depth of education inaccessible to the majority of early modern women. Even so, Louise-Hollandine remains one well-documented early modern example of a nun with painterly skills (although her *oeuvre* still needs to be mapped out in proper detail). Another, even better documented example is

36 Rubens was a member of one of the Jesuit Sodalities in his home city of Antwerp. In the handbook published for these Sodalities in 1610, 1615 and again in 1620 there are explicit instructions that sexual desires arising from contemplating creatures, people or paintings must be avoided because they are sinful. It is also sinful to make paintings that elicit such desires. [Willem de Pretere], *Het Hantboexken der Sodaliteyt oft Broederschap van de H. Maeghet Maria Inghestelt inde Societeyt Iesu* (Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1615), 117–118.

37 Francis Martin, *Angélique Arnauld: Abbess of Port Royal* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1876), 219–220. Despite its age this remains a very useful biography.

38 Christopher A. Kerstjens, "A Princely Painter: Princess Louise Hollandine of the Palatinate, Abbess of Maubuisson," *Court Historian* 4 (1999): 161–66. Something of Louise Hollandine's reputation may be gained from Niall MacKenzie, "Jane Barker, Louise Hollandine of the Palatinate and 'Solomons Wise Daughter'," *The Review of English Studies* (*New Series*) 58 (2007): 64–72.

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FIGURE 4.10 Louise-Hollandine of the Palatinate, *Self-portrait*, seventeenth century, present whereabouts unknown

the sixteenth-century Florentine nun Plautilla Nelli.[39] It was surely perfectly in order for such painters to portray their monastic sisters. In fact, it may be the

39 See Jonathan Nelson ed., *Suor Plautilla Nelli, 1523–1588: First Woman Painter of Florence* (Florence: Cadmo, 2000).

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case that several early modern nuns' portraits were made within the walls; in Europe there is a long tradition of conventual painting dating back to medieval book illumination.[40] But there is a problem here: given how many of the nuns' portraits remain anonymous, it is hard to be conclusive about their authorship. The extent to which early modern nuns were also portraitists certainly needs more research.

Given all of this, it would seem that the often quite generic nature of early modern nuns' portraits may partly be rooted in the complex negotiations involved in conventual portrait encounters, especially when involving a male painter. Nuns and their portraitists had to navigate in some manner a cluster of tensions inherent in the deeply patriarchal post-Tridentine monastic ideals for women. Somehow, they had to bridge the gap between the cloister and the world, between the shielding veil and the openly revealed face.

3 Spaces (1): Familial Bonds

One can only get so far by examining the surviving pictorial evidence. To gain further scholarly purchase on early modern nuns' portraits it is necessary also to attend to their functions, insofar as these can established. Some portraits were made for their sitters' families. This much is indicated by the number of early modern portraits of nuns that can still be found in country houses belonging to prominent English Roman Catholics.[41]

One good example is that of the Augustinian nun Anne Stonor, attributed to the French painter Jean-François de Troy, which hangs in her family home in Oxfordshire (Fig. 4.4).[42] A smiling young woman faces the viewer, her blossoming face framed by her monastic coif and veil whilst the outline of her body is almost entirely obscured by her voluminous habit. In many ways this image falls within the generic ideal of youthful female beauty that Rubens also deployed in his portrait of Ana Dorotea. Again, this ideal is carefully tempered: Anne's portrait comes with a nose and a setting of the eyes that are sufficiently individualised to suggest that she is an actual person.

40 There is, for example, the excellent account provided in Jeffrey H. Hamburger, *Nuns as artists: the visual culture of a medieval convent* (London and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

41 There is an extensive literature on English convents in the Low Countries. One of the most recent works is Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *English Benedictine Nuns in Exile in the Seventeenth Century: Living Spirituality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); another helpful account is Walker, *Gender and Politics in Early Modern Europe*.

42 Oliver Garnett, ed., *Stonor: Home of the Stonor Family for 850 Years* (Stonor: Stonor Enterprises, 2010), 17.

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Anne holds open a small book in her left hand while her right rests on a passage in a larger volume, next to which lie another two of the same size. The visible text at the top of the page allows the viewer to identify these books as St Augustine's *City of God*. Yet again this balances the individual with the generic, by suggesting scholarship of a delighted and highly dedicated kind combined with a clear, even didactic address to the audience. Perhaps we are to imagine that Anne is identifying for us the patristic origins of a passage in her small devotional book. In some ways, this portrait playfully subverts gendered pictorial norms: it is similar to Rubens's depiction of Ophovius insofar as it evokes a cerebral personality engaging directly with the viewer. Nevertheless, Anne's chastity is asserted much more forcefully. Her lower body is shielded behind a barrier far firmer than cloth: the books and the table located, not coincidentally, directly in front of her lower pelvis, implying that her chastity and scholarship are mutually dependent.

What might such a portrait have meant to Anne's family, a staunchly Roman Catholic dynasty who would endure several rounds of persecution in early modern England? It may have seemed fortifying, for several reasons. Most straightforwardly, it made a daughter, sister and aunt now living in distant Paris visible within her Oxfordshire family home. In this manner, the painting fits with an absolutely standard function assigned to portraiture in early modern Europe, that of making the absent seem present.[43] Probably, Anne's picture played a mnemonic role; it kept her in the mind and bosom of her family, if only figuratively. Second, the portrait posits her apparent happiness in her vocation. Its depiction of cheerful but reassuringly chaste feminine scholarship was surely a comfort to a family who had sacrificed a great deal to remain faithful to Rome.[44] From this follows the third reason, which hinges on Anne's evident prettiness. A face like hers – if she really looked like her portrait, that is – would have had a certain currency on the early modern marriage market. English Catholic families like the Stonors made a point of marrying their children to co-religionists of equal rank.[45] The limited number of these in the British Isles must have meant that committing a pretty daughter to a distant cloister was, in effect, the alienation of a dynastic asset, a not inconsequential gift to the

43 Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits*, 193–198.

44 See Robert J. Stonor, *Stonor: A Catholic Sanctuary in the Chilterns from the fifth century till today* (Newport: R. H. Johns, 1951) and Sally Jordan, "Gentry Catholicism in the Thames Valley, 1660–1780," *British Catholic History* 27 (2004): 217–243.

45 Gabriel Glickman, *The English Catholic community, 1688–1745: politics, culture and ideology* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 12, 62–63, 70, 80 and 84.

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Church.[46] Anne's portrait was also a reminder of the patronage that the Stonor family had extended to her order, evidence of a religious sacrifice perhaps made in the hope of gaining prayers and other spiritual favours for her family.

Similar arguments may be made about the early modern portrait at Burton Constable Hall in Yorkshire, showing an as yet unidentified nun of the Tunstall family who was an Augustinian in Louvain (Fig. 4.11), or that of Anne Bedingfeld at Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk, who was a Discalced Carmelite in Lier (Fig. 4.12).[47] Significantly, the Bedingfeld portrait forms part of a seventeenth-century set that also includes married women of the family.[48] Hanging, as they still do, at Oxburgh, this set of portraits make manifest the various dynastic and spiritual alliances enjoyed by the Bedingfelds in the years after the English Civil War. These familial images thus confirm Evangelisti's point that early modern portraits of nuns evince how their sitters would retain close links with their natal families even as they devoted themselves to religion.

It may be that Pieter Leermans's portrait of the Carmelite novice had a similar purpose (Fig. 4.5). Certainly, the smiling countenance recalls the portraits of Anne Stonor and sister Tunstall, both made for familial contexts (Fig. 4.4 and Fig. 4.11). Moreover, Leerman's portrait fits surprisingly well with the better documented profession portraits made of nuns in New Spain (compare, for example, with Fig. 4.1); one indication that Córdova may be mistaken in assuming that this particular type of imagery was a colonial phenomenon. At the same time, the pallor of the young woman might imply that the portrait is posthumous, a treasured relic of a daughter or sister who had died in the odour of sanctity around the time of her profession.

At least judging by the surviving English examples, some early modern nuns' portraits had distinctly dynastic purposes. They made absent family members present. To fit with this function, nuns' portraits for familial consumption involved a delicate pictorial balancing act, combining individualising characteristics with a more generic ideal of cheery yet chaste youthful female beauty. In this, they follow a pattern which may also be observed in the idealising portraits of Stuart court beauties produced by painters such as Anthony van Dyck

46 This point is ably made in Lux Sterritt, *English Benedictine nuns*, 68.

47 See the very useful 'Who were the nuns?' website: https://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/search/search.php?uid=&quote=no&given=&religion=&surname=Tunstall&variants=on&cid=0&sdate=0&edate=0&loc= (on the Tunstall family) and https://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/search/search.php?uid=&quote=no&given=Ann&religion=&surname=Bedingfield&variants=on&cid=0&sdate=0&edate=0&loc= (on Anne Bedingfeld); both last accessed 22 May 2017.

48 Oliver Garnett, ed., *Oxburgh Hall* (London: The National Trust, 2000), 19–20.

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FIGURE 4.11 Anon. Flemish artist, *Ann, Mary or Cecily Tunstall*, early to mid-eighteenth century, Burton Constable Hall, East Yorkshire

and Peter Lely.[49] Yet, unlike this courtly tradition, the familial portraits of nuns discussed here both marked and were embedded in a broader and rather fluid cultural zone, that which constituted the north-western European frontier of Roman Catholicism.

49 On this tradition, see Catherine MacLeod and Julia Marciari Alexander, eds., *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2001).

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FIGURE 4.12 Anon. Flemish artist, *Anne Bedingfeld*, c. 1680, Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk

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4 Spaces (II): Parlour Games

Not all portraits of nuns were produced for families; at least in the Netherlands it seems that they often hung in convent parlours. This is suggested, for example, in the description of a visit to the English Discalced Carmelite convent in Antwerp written by another traveller, the Scottish Calvinist Thomas Penson, in 1687: "At the gate I was let in by a servant who directed me up one pair of stairs, which led me into a fair light chamber (adorned with the pictures of many devout women). On the one side thereof was a large double iron grate and by it hung a cord, with which I was ordered to ring a bell …"[50] If these pictures "of many devout women" were portraits, they were part of the nuns' self-representation, one way of addressing the outside world, and not just the devout laity but also visiting Protestants and other sceptics.

That this was so is confirmed by an entry in the accounts of the Premonstratensian nuns of Sint-Catharinadal, one of the few Netherlandish convents to weather intact the many religious and political upheavals of the early modern period. In 1681 the nuns' confessor was entrusted with commissioning six portraits from one Master Sommeren in Antwerp, three of which were of confessors, the other three of nuns.[51] The purpose of the nuns' portraits is clearly stated: "So as to give the Beggars [i.e. Calvinists] occasion to speak of the antiquity and nobility of our convent, these little nuns hang in the parlour".[52] Evidently these nuns' portraits also had a mnemonic role to play. They were reminders of past glories meant to prompt parlour conversations with and amongst potentially hostile visitors.

Why did the nuns of Sint-Catharinadal feel that they needed such portraits for their parlour? To explore this question, it is helpful first to sketch out a little more of their circumstances. Their convent had been founded in 1271 and from 1295 onwards the nuns resided in the city of Breda, which was eventually to become one of the many domains of the Orange-Nassau family. Later, during the Eighty Years' War (1566–1648), Breda changed hands several times and, as one would expect, when it fell under Protestant domination the nuns of Sint-Catharinadal were subject to various forms of harassment. For example, in 1591

50 Thomas Penson, 'Penson's Short Progress into Holland, Flanders and France, with Remarques', 1687, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Ms 3003. Here quoted after C. D. van Strien, "Recusant Houses in the Southern Netherlands as seen by British Tourists, c. 1650–1720," *Recusant History* 20 (1991): 495–511, 500, ellipsis added.

51 It has not been possible to identify this painter so far.

52 'Om aen de geuse occasie te geven om te spreecken van de autheijt en edelheijt van ons clooster hangen de nonnekens in 't spreeckhuijs.' Here quoted after Sponselee-de Meester, *Het Norbertinessenklooster*, 171.

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their church was confiscated and the sisters had to worship in a small chapel. Their property was gradually encroached upon until 1625, when Breda fell to the Habsburg armies from the Catholic south and all sequestered monastic goods were returned to their former owners. Then, in 1637, Breda returned to Protestant domination. Having learnt their lesson, the Premonstratensian sisters vocally proclaimed the patronage of the Orange-Nassau family and thus were able to hold on to some of their privileges and most of their property. However, by 1646 their situation had become so difficult that they decided to leave Breda temporarily, settling in a small country manor near Oosterhout. In 1672 the nuns returned triumphantly to Breda under the impression that Orange-Nassau patronage would guarantee their safety. Their hopes were dashed only seven years later when, under severe Protestant pressure, they had to return to their country manor for good. There, with grudging Orange-Nassau support, they gradually recovered from their misfortunes.[53]

The three portraits for the parlour at Oosterhout were therefore commissioned shortly after a period of great turbulence by and for a community of nuns who had lived through considerable Calvinist bullying. By 1681 they very much needed their Protestant neighbours to respect the "antiquity and nobility" of their convent; their very survival depended on it. Accordingly, the three portraits were not of living sisters but rather of three prominent fifteenth-century members of the Sint-Catharinadal community: Odilia of Nassau (Fig. 4.13), Elizabeth of Breda and of Leck (Fig. 4.14) and Machtild of Polanen (Fig. 4.15). All three were related to the Orange-Nassau family. Machtild was an aunt of Johanna of Polanen, Lady of Breda and Den Leck, whose marriage to the impoverished German Count Engelbrecht I of Nassau-Dillenburg had brought him substantial landholdings in the Low Countries; these would form the basis of the dynasty's future wealth.[54] For his part, Engelbrecht was a direct ancestor in the male line of the current Prince of Orange, Stadhouder of Holland and Lord of Breda, the staunchly Calvinist William III, who from 1689 onwards also became King of England and Scotland. Meanwhile, Odilia of Nassau was Engelbrecht I's grandchild, daughter of his son Count Jan IV of Nassau-Dillenburg, also a direct ancestor of the current Prince of Orange.[55] Elizabeth of Breda and of Leck is harder to identify but she may have been an illegitimate daughter of Johanna of Polanen's father and she is identified as a

53 The above paragraph is based on Sponselee-de Meester, *Het Norbertinessenklooster*, 160–190.

54 On Machtild and Johanna, see V. Paquay, "De stichting van de Wendelinuskapel te Breda," *Jaarboek De Oranjeboom* 36 (1983): 1–34, especially 4–7.

55 On Odilia of Nassau, see http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/OdiliavanNassau, last visited 22 May 2017.

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FIGURE 4.13 Master Sommeren, *Odilia of Nassau*, 1681, Sint-Catharinadal, Oosterhout

prioress of Sint-Catharinadal on the frame of her portrait. Clearly, the point behind the three portraits was to remind all visitors to the parlour that Sint-Catharinadal was indeed a noble foundation, with ancient and enduring familial connections to the Orange court. These paintings also make the absent present, only in this case it is the distant and invisible past.

It may seem strange that the nuns of Sint-Catharinadal would endow such emphatically posthumous images with the status of portraiture, let alone with persuasive mnemonic power, but that is perhaps because we now understand the category of portraiture too readily within a photographic paradigm. Certainly, it is clear from the Premonstratensians' accounts that they saw these three images as having profound evidential weight, a point which is further supported by the actual portraits. The three paintings from the parlour at Sint-Catharinadal form a set: they have matching frames and follow the same severe pictorial format. They are obviously meant to work cumulatively, like the dynastic portraits at Oxburgh. In addition, all three have prominent inscriptions so that their sitters may be identified with confidence. This is just

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FIGURE 4.14 Master Sommeren, *Elizabeth of Breda and of Lek*, 1681, Sint-Catharinadal, Oosterhout

as well because two of the three have similar features, perhaps to suggest close kinship (Figs. 4.13 and 4.14). In any case, Master Sommeren of Antwerp could hardly have known what these medieval ladies looked like so he may have produced idealised images based on existing *tronies* or perhaps on medieval visual sources that are now beyond identification.[56] At least he did not have to peer through any grilles to do so.

On the other hand, there is a certain similarity between these nuns and Sint-Catharinadal's recently deceased, somewhat reluctant Calvinist benefactress, Amalia of Solms-Braunfels, Princess of Orange, grandmother of William III and until 1672 his main guardian (Fig. 4.16). This is most notable in the shared chubby chins. If that is so, for the well-informed early modern viewer these

56 Other painters active in early modern Antwerp certainly drew on such sources, including Antonio de Succa, who specialised in historical portraiture. Kristin L. Belkin, *The Costume Books – Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, part XXIV* (Brussels: Arcade Press, 1980), 35–43.

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FIGURE 4.15 Master Sommeren, *Machtild of Polanen*, 1681, Sint-Catharinadal, Oosterhout

nuns' portraits may have evoked present as well as past links with the Orange family – although it may equally be that both nuns and princesses were made to conform to idealising standards of female beauty, as was the case in England.

To complicate this even further, there is the fact that the image of Machtild of Polanen (Fig. 4.15) is far more individualised, most notably in the prominent cheekbones and the forcefully modelled nose with its broad nostrils and distinctly shaped septum. Maybe this image is explicitly based on one of the nuns at Sint-Catharinadal, perhaps even the prioress, who must have been involved in the portrait commission. If so, this would have lent further persuasive power to the portrait, literally figuring a living nun as an important Orange kinswoman, part of the dynasty that had brought them the bulk of their Netherlandish domains, including the Lordship of Breda.

Although this can only remain speculation, the painting of Machtild of Polanen demonstrates that early modern nuns' portraits were a highly flexible phenomenon, encompassing long deceased as well as living individuals. Such portraits need not be exact likenesses to come with persuasive evidential

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FIGURE 4.16 Workshop of Gerard van Honthorst, *Amalia of Solms-Braunfels, Princess of Orange*, 1650, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

potency; at least, this was so at Sint-Catharinadal. From this one may draw a number of conclusions. First, that in nuns' portraits the sense of an individual is sometimes less important than fitting in with familial or conventual strategies, concerns and identities. Second, that when hung in nuns' parlours such portraits came with their own temporalities, making present those who were long dead and thus helping to constitute a conventual community across time, neatly complementing the community as defined by the monastic space.

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Third, that nuns' portraits were thought to have certain powers, to be a form of advocacy, at least when hung in spaces frequented by Protestants and other sceptics.

This point may be explored further by returning to Penson's travel diary. He reports at length on the conversations he had with the English Discalced Carmelites in their Antwerp parlour. The first, a rather senior sister, came to the grille and enquired into his faith and, in response, "I truly answered that my education had been of the Reformed Protestant religion according to the Church of England, to which she was pleased to reply: 'I am sorry'."[57] As this suggests, during such encounters the parlour was understood as a kind of missionary space, as is also evident in Skippon's travel account.[58] That nuns used their parlours as a way of challenging Protestant scepticism becomes even clearer during Penson's subsequent encounter, worth quoting at length for the light it throws on this peculiarly conventual scenario:

> There soon appeared (as an angel of light) a delicate, proper, young, beautiful lady, all in white garments and barefaced, whose graceful presence was delightful to behold and yet struck an awful reverence, considering she was devout and religious. And having paid my respects and fed my greedy eye a short moment on this lovely creature, I thus spoke: "Madam, may Heaven bless and enable you in your undertakings, which to us that are abroad in the world seem so hard and difficult. For we account it no less than being buried alive to be immured within the confines of these walls." To which she answered: "Sir, the world is much mistaken in their harsh censures of these religious houses, not considering the felicities we here enjoy in the service of God. And although for my part I may forsake this place when I please, being not but in the year of my noviceship, yet do assure you, Sir, I find so great satisfaction and contentment in this manner of life (being daily present with these devout women in holy exercises and prayers), that I would not change conditions with any princess or noble lady in the world."[59]

There is eroticism at play here. Penson unashamedly enjoys looking at the desirable yet unattainable young novice, who trumps his lust by inspiring "an

57 Van Strien, "Recusant Houses," 500.

58 See, for example, Skippon, 'An account', 362 and 370, where nuns seek to sell touch relics to him or to persuade him that one of their number has been miraculously healed by the intervention of the Virgin Mary.

59 Van Strien, "Recusant Houses," 500.

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awful reverence". It is hard not to see this as a deliberate and probably well-worn strategy on behalf of the English nuns. First a senior sister identifies the Scottish visitor as a Protestant; then a pretty novice tries to persuade him of the blessings of enclosure. It is precisely because she is a novice that her lovely face may remain unveiled so as to support her missionary endeavour.

In fairness, it should be noted that this eroticism seems to be a recurrent feature of travel writings by early modern Protestant men; it is certainly also at play in young Skippon's dubious attention to nuns' faces, veils, habits, curtains and parlour grilles. Yet Penson's diary still suggests that a beautiful nun was thought to have special persuasive powers. Bearing the case of Sint-Catharinadal in mind, presumably this could be extended to her portrait when hung in the convent parlour. And, if that is so, this is a further explanation of why it is hard to identify the sitters of so many early modern nuns' portraits. They follow a relatively generic ideal of feminine beauty because – paradoxically – that was one way of endowing them with missionary potential. This is further supported by Mónica Díaz's account of nuns' portraits from the Americas, where she argues that these equally generic images have their roots firmly in their missionary context.[60] Several of the early modern convents in the Netherlands were in similar situations, located in a liminal zone where nuns might regularly converse with and, hopefully, influence Protestant sceptics.

It is, however, important to underscore that conventional feminine beauty does not feature in all portraits of early modern nuns. There are some paintings that seem to be in deliberate contrast with the generic type discussed so far. One example is of an anonymous Benedictine nun portrayed in her sixty-seventh year, a work that in 1994 still hung in the great parlour of the abbey of Sint-Godelieve in Bruges (Fig. 4.17).[61] The iconography is, in part, derived from a print of St Teresa of Avila, including the gaze fixed firmly on the crucifix as if deliberately eschewing contact with the viewer.[62] There is little erotic charge here.

Instead the purpose was probably to celebrate the sitters' advanced age and, with it, to showcase her withdrawal from the sexual economy of the convent parlour into focused contemplation of her own approaching death. Thus, while the attributes of crucifix, skull and book are conventional, that is not the case for the carefully modelled face with its wrinkles and distinctive long

60 Díaz, "Native American Women and Religion," 205–231.

61 Vandenbroeck, *Hooglied*, 134 and 235 (catalogue 74).

62 Margit Thøfner, "How to Look Like a (Female) Saint: The Early Iconography of St Teresa of Avila' in *Female Monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View*, ed. Cordula van Wyhe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 59–78.

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FIGURE 4.17 Anon., *Portrait of a Benedictine Nun aged 67*, 1656, until 2013 in the Abbey of Sint-Godelieve, Bruges

nose. The general effect is one of both literal and metaphoric seniority, the monastic equivalence of dignified grandmotherhood; pictures of senior nuns would very likely repay further study. Suffice it here to say that, within the walls

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FIGURE 4.18
Anon., *Florence de Werguignoeul, Abbess of Notre Dame de la Paix in Douai*, 1627, until 2013 in the Abbey of Sint-Godelieve, Bruges

of Sint-Godelieve, such portrayals of conventual dignity would have been further underscored by other paintings of renowned Benedictine abbesses with similar faces, poses and attributes (see, for example, Fig. 4.18). Again, the effect would have been cumulative. In the early modern period, Sint-Godelieve came with a set of images clearly meant to foreground monastic lineage as well as a distinctly feminine type of authority rooted in physical and devotional seniority.

A slightly different example of this portrait type is of yet another unknown nun, this time an Augustinian from Mechlin (Fig. 4.19).[63] It is an accomplished piece where the deliberately rough brushwork conveys the wonderfully distinct if forbidding features of a woman in late middle age, her mouth firmly set, her eyes almost invisible behind their droopy, lashless lids. One might even imagine that her eyes are in the process of rolling backwards into their lids, in a trancelike withdrawal from the present world. As in the two images from Sint-Godelieve, the overall impression is far removed from the flirtatiousness inherent in Penson's encounter with the pretty novice. This woman's portrait (or, perhaps, it is a *tronie*, though this does not fit with its conventual provenance) is far more suggestive of interiority, of contemplation. If images like this were hung in early modern convent parlours, they would have served as reminders of a type of feminine authority rooted simultaneously in seniority and in a withdrawal from the world into contemplation. At the same time, such portraits would have worked as foils simultaneously to foreground and hold in

63 Vandenbroeck, *Hooglied*, 137 and 236 (catalogue 87).

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FIGURE 4.19 Anon., *Portrait of an Augustinian sister*, late sixteenth century (?), Diocesan Sisters, Overijse-Mechelen

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check some of the erotic charge that may have been sparked by younger, prettier nuns' faces. This is not a far-fetched suggestion given that, as Dürer's drawing of Metzgen shows (Fig. 4.8), in the early modern period there was a certain interest in juxtaposing the features of younger and older women.

5 Conclusions

In the Netherlands and beyond, early modern portraits of nuns come with an intractable sense of the generic. Nearly all of them conform to stereotype, fitting somewhere on a spectrum defined at one end by the austere yet womanly authority of the withdrawn senior nun and at the other by the sexual potency of the pretty young novice. Naturally there are many variations but most remain close to these twin themes of forbiddingly virtuous contemplation and desirable yet impeccable chastity. These two categories even seem to be at play in the few surviving early modern parodies of conventual portraiture, which represent either grotesque old age or naughtily unchaste youth.[64]

At the same time, it was patently important that nuns' portraits should evoke a certain if limited sense of individuality. Most of the images discussed in this essay have some features to mark them out as portraits, some distinguishing characteristics that prevent them from becoming wholly generic. That is even the case for the paintings from Sint-Catharinadal which cannot be defined as likenesses in any straightforward way. This, in turn, must have given evidential traction to a monastic ideal of youthful chastity – of what a sceptical yet fascinated lay visitor like Penson saw as a deliberate sacrifice of sexual currency in the cause of religion – that would eventually ripen into devout seniority. Nuns' portraits propagated the notion that such ideals could be and were made actual, that they corresponded with the lived experiences of real women.

This fits neatly with the two purposes of nuns' portraits identified above. Some were destined to hang in family homes, others were for convent parlours, both a type of space frequented by the laity, whether devout, sceptical or Protestant. Accordingly, such portraits were the nuns' faces to the world, both adverts for and guarantors of the virtues of monastic life, a particularly acute issue in confessional frontier zones like the Netherlands and England. Understood in this context, it is hardly surprising that early modern portraitists

64 For examples of this, see Viviana Farina, "Ribera's Satirical Portrait of a Nun," *Master Drawings* 52 (2014): 471–480; and Melissa Percival, "Portraits of Mademoiselle de Charolais as a Franciscan Friar: Gender, Religion and Cross-Dressing," *Art History* 37 (2014): 890–911.

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of nuns worked with, around, and sometimes against a set of formulaic and thus easily recognisable pictorial ideals of feminine monastic piety.

On a broader level, these points may be linked to the many paradoxes and tensions inherent in the distinct gender roles occupied by early modern nuns. Although the sisters formally exchanged their natal for their monastic families, blood ties and familial status remained important both within and beyond their convents. Moreover, early modern nuns were meant to renounce sexuality to live exemplary corporate lives, whether in devout contemplation or in active charity, and yet they were never wholly outside the prevailing sexual economy nor, of course, could they shrug off all the other usual human foibles. That is one of the core lesson of early modern nuns' portraits: they show how taxing it was for these women and their portraitists to negotiate the many and sometime conflicting social expectations attendant on their monastic roles.

On this basis it could be argued that early modern nuns' portraits are so very generic because nuns, in themselves, had already taken on certain qualities of portraiture. Taking the veil and the habit entailed covering oneself with the identifying marks of the nun. It meant displaying palpably on and through one's body a certain submission to larger social and religious systems ranging across both space and time. In general, that is what early modern portraits do, by showing individuals performing a wide variety of (often distinctly gendered) social roles, from the sovereign ruler, the victorious warrior and the dedicated scholar to the court beauty, the devoted wife and the chaste nun. A nun was meant to fashion herself into the image of her role; her portrait both performed and exemplified that act of self-fashioning.

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CHAPTER 5

Women Writers and the Dutch Stage: Public Femininity in the Plays of Verwers and Questiers

Martine van Elk

In the seventeenth century the plays performed at the Amsterdam Schouwburg, the only public theater in the city, were overwhelmingly written by men. Dutch theater shared with English theater a long-standing prohibition on female acting in institutionalized theatrical spaces, which was not lifted until 1655, when the first actress played a leading role in the Schouwburg. By then two women playwrights, Catharina Verwers and Catharina Questiers, had seen their plays produced for the stage. Verwers's only play was performed in 1644, over ten years before Ariana Nozeman made her debut, while Questiers's plays were written and performed between 1655 and 1665. Given the vexed position of women in the public sphere and in particular their complex relationship to the public theater, this essay explores these playwrights' representations of women in public and private. Both Verwers and Questiers present women in public as lacking in power; they must submit to conventional versions of public femininity and empty themselves of private desires and motivations in order to occupy a public space. An effective public femininity that is coherent, strong, and independently articulated is not yet possible without sacrifice in these plays. Still, by presenting a range of female public presences and conflicted attitudes towards them, Verwers and Questiers allowed their audiences to reflect on and consider the nature of the public sphere itself and its relationship to gender.

Before we turn to the plays, some historical context for the relationship of Dutch women to the public-private divide is necessary. As extensive study has shown, those terms were unstable and in flux in the seventeenth century. Traditional understandings of the public and private realms were influenced by absolutist political systems, which presented the two as mutually constitutive and parallel spheres of being, as the familiar tendency to treat the home as the microcosm of the commonwealth suggests.[1] Yet, Jürgen Habermas has argued,

1 The parallel, seen in the type of political thinking identified as patriarchalism, is important to writings about the family and the state all over Europe. For the English context, see Michael McKeon's *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge*

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as a consequence of the Reformation and the questioning of absolutism, a new understanding of public and private emerged. Not only did the domestic sphere come to be seen as a space for devotion and spiritual reform, making it fundamentally different from the public realm, but the public sphere itself would eventually emerge as a site for rational exchange by citizens on the basis of reason, rather than deference to authority.[2] This double development – the rise of an ideology of domesticity and of a newly conceived public sphere – was particularly important to women, who had always been positioned as properly in the household but whose domestic presence now came to be seen as vital to social order, national identity, and religious reformation. Such ideological and conceptual shifts do not necessarily match social practice, of course. Women were still active in the marketplace as buyers and sellers, but the change in thinking all over Europe had a strong impact on notions of ideal and especially elite femininity.[3] These changes suggest the potential for female "agency" in the sense in which Martha Howell uses the term, as "born in the contradictions that are inherent in discursive structures."[4] Those contradictions are in this case a product of uneven developments over time in conceptions of the public-private divide.

The lateness of the arrival of the Dutch actress on the public stage and the near-simultaneous emergence of a small number of female playwrights should be placed in this cultural context. The stage in general had long been considered an inappropriate venue for women, given the association of female acting with prostitution and the general obstacles to female public action and speech, current all over early modern Europe and rooted in biblical injunctions and legal prohibitions. In spite of all this, the tradition of all-male acting and

(Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). This way of thinking is also frequently found in the works of Dutch humanists and reformers. McKeon's work is central to my analysis of the public-private relationship in this period.

2 Though his theory has been criticized for not paying enough attention to the public sphere as an exclusionary realm and for not acknowledging other forms of public spheres and counterpublics, Habermas's work continues to be fundamental to much historicizing of and theorizing about the public sphere. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991).

3 Wider contexts for representations of female publicity in English and Dutch texts of this period are described in my book, *Early Modern Women's Writing: Domesticity, Privacy, and the Public Sphere in England and the Dutch Republic* (Cham: Springer/Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). For historical information on women in the marketplace, see among others, Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands, c. 1580–1815* (Amsterdam: Askant, 2007).

4 See Howell's essay in this volume, chapter 1, 31.

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transvestite performances by men and boys was gradually abandoned, partly under the influence of traveling players and fairground performances by women.[5] Although it is difficult to pinpoint a definitive explanation for the delay in female acting in the Dutch Republic, when it comes to playwriting, a possible reason for the relative scarcity of women playwrights in the period is the collaborative and intensely public nature of the stage. The works of Dutch women writers were often treated as properly part of elite, elegant pastime and small-scale social exchange, suitable for a limited audience of friends and family. Typically, though not always, women were supposed to stop writing or circulating their works widely upon marriage, purportedly because a married woman would no longer have time for such activities. Naturally, plays for the public stage do not fit the domestic categorization of pastime. The cultural environment of the Schouwburg created further impediments to female playwriting. The only public theater in Amsterdam, founded in 1638, the Schouwburg had its roots in the male-dominated tradition of the *Rederijkerskamers* (Chambers of Rhetoric). It was both a charitable and profit-oriented institution: the board of regents was appointed by the city council, proceeds went to charity, and the stated aim of its founders was to educate the general public and shape Dutch identity in the young Republic, an enterprise in which women functioned as muses rather than active participants.[6]

Still, by the later seventeenth century, when women on stage had become a familiar sight, Jacob Lescailje's print shop, which was licensed to do all print work for the Schouwburg, was run by his daughters, and three Dutch women, including Lescailje's eldest daughter Katherine, saw their plays produced for public performance. All three wrote drama based on Spanish and French plays, including works by Lope de Vega and Pierre Corneille. That these women wrote adaptations and translations is not remarkable or necessarily tied to their gender. The extraordinary popularity of Spanish drama on the Dutch stage could be considered surprising in light of the political hostility between the two countries. Yet, as theater historians have shown, when playwrights chose Spanish source texts, whether they read them in the original, in French, or in a commissioned translation into Dutch, political considerations seem to have been largely ignored. Spanish plays were very fashionable and above all

5 For an overview of the tradition of female impersonation by men, see Louis Peter Grijp, "Boys and Female Impersonators in the Amsterdam Theatre of the Seventeenth Century," *Medieval English Theatre* 28 (2006): 131–70. See for the earliest actresses, my essay, "'Before she ends up in a brothel': Public Femininity and the First Actresses in England and the Low Countries," *Early Modern Low Countries* 1.1 (2017): 30–50, http://doi.org/10.18352/emlc.5.

6 For an overview of the theater in Amsterdam, see Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Het Nederlandse Renaissancetoneel* (Utrecht: Hes, 1991).

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profitable, helping the Schouwburg acquire the repertoire it needed to cater to its audience.[7] Even though humanists considered translation a more appropriate type of writing for women than original composition, on the Dutch stage it was not a gendered phenomenon of an oppressive nature, nor did it indicate inexperience or lack of education.[8] Like their male counterparts, these women, I hope to show, found ways to incorporate their own ideas into these plays, particularly when it came to public femininity and female sexuality. In that respect, they resembled other women writers whose translations represented "a highly coded political or ideological intervention," as Danielle Clarke puts it.[9] Clarke is mainly concerned with translation as an activity in the domestic sphere, but the public stage, with its collaborative mode of production, was capable of disseminating a translator's voice more widely than other types

7 Female playwrights were closely following dramatic trends. Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt estimate that at least two-thirds of new plays staged between 1651 and 1672 were translations and adaptations from Spanish and French, with Spanish plays dominating until about 1665 and French plays afterwards. *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur, 1560–1700*, vol. 11 of *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur*, ed. A. J. Gelderblom and A. M. Musschoot (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2008), 525. Research into numbers, reception, and case studies of playwrights has been done by Kim Jautze, Leonor Álavarez Francès, and Frans R. E. Blom, "Spaans theater in de Amsterdamse Schouwburg (1638–1672). Kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve analyse van de creatieve industrie van het vertalen," *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 32 (2016) 1, 12–39. See also other essays in the same volume and especially the helpful introductory essay, "'Neem liever een Spaans spel.' Nieuw onderzoek naar Spaans toneel op de Noord- en Zuid-Nederlandse planken in de zeventiende eeuw," by Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, 2–11. For French drama, see Anna de Haas, "Frans classicisme en het Nederlandse toneel, 1660–1730," *De Achttiende Eeuw* 29 (1997): 127–40, and, especially for female translations, see Pim van Oostrum, "Dutch Interest in 17th- and 18th-Century French Tragedies Written by Women," in *'I have heard about you.' Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf*, ed. Suzan van Dijk et al., trans. Jo Nesbitt (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), 153–72.

8 Annelies de Jeu is aware of the dominance of translated plays but calls translation "good practice material" for women playwrights "considering their inexperience with the genre." *'t Spoor der dichteressen. Netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000), 214.

9 Although she deals with England, Danielle Clarke's discussion of the ways in which translation could enable expression is relevant to the Low Countries and these plays in particular. "Translation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 167–80, esp. 169. For female political interventions through translation, see for instance, Mihoko Suzuki, "Women, Civil War, and Empire: The Politics of Translation in Katherine Philips's *Pompey* and *Horace*," *The History of British Women's Writing, 1610–1690*, vol. 3, ed. Mihoko Suzuki (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2011), 270–86, and for a Dutch non-dramatic example, my "Courtliness, Piety, and Politics: Emblem Books by Georgette de Montenay, Anna Roemers Visscher, and Esther Inglis," *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, ed. Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 183–212.

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of translation. The two plays I discuss in this essay do not suppress the culturally dominant associations between public femininity and eroticism. They show clearly that their authors saw public femininity as a product of available cultural discourses. Thus, to return to Howell's argument, what we might perceive as "agency" in these plays is located less in overt challenges to patriarchy or negotiation of its restrictions than in reflection on its workings and contradictions. Verwers and Lescailje reveal that public femininity is an outcome of the interplay of male views of female sexuality and virtue on the one hand and women's ability to control their own public presence on the other. Both are specifically concerned with elite femininity and courtliness: Verwers offers a Reformed revision of elite ideals but also presents us with an allegory of female fame, while Questiers contemplates the repression of the personal that is required of public women. In both plays, the marriage at the end promises to transform the relationship between female public and private life. Although the marriage itself brings fame in Verwers's play, there is no indication that her protagonist will any longer perform in public; in Questiers's text, marriage can convey or retain political authority for women, but only if the private self is suppressed.

1 Verwers: Romance Reformed

The first play by a Dutch woman performed on the public stage of the Schouwburg was *Spaensche heydin* (*Spanish Pagan*, 1644), based on the novella *La gitanilla* (*The Little Gypsy Girl*, 1613) by Miguel de Cervantes. Catharina Verwers (c. 1618–1684) is a somewhat enigmatic figure because, unlike the other female playwrights mentioned in this essay, she had no known familial connections to the theater.[10] Moreover, although she may have composed the play while unmarried, she had been married for close to two years in 1644, when it was staged and printed – this at a time when most Dutch women writers were expected to stop publishing once they became wives and mothers.[11] There is much we

10 De Jeu notes that there is a Dirck Claeszoon Verwer among the regents of the Schouwburg in the records for 1646–49. *'t Spoor der dichteressen*, 215. However, as yet we have no evidence that they were indeed related, and Verwers's play was in any case first staged before he was a regent (1645–49). C. N. Wybrands, *Het Amsterdamsche tooneel van 1617–1772* (Utrecht: Beijers, 1873), 227–28.

11 Verwers did not publish much after her play, aside from a few poems and a contribution to a poem by multiple authors, printed in 1654. She lived in fairly affluent artistic households: her father was a successful painter of seascapes, and her husband, Christian Dusart, was a painter who probably studied under Rembrandt. Born into an Anabaptist

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do not know about the play. We do not know its precise date of composition, and there is a lack of clarity about how often it was performed and what its relationship is to another contemporary play based on the same story with the same title. The other play, also entitled *De Spaensche heidin* (*The Spanish Pagan*), written by Mattheus Gansneb Tengnagel, was published together with Tengnagel's prose retelling of the story in 1643. We do know that Verwers's play was composed before Tengnagel's and that it was circulating for at least 11 months before its first recorded performance at the Schouwburg in June 1644.[12] The revival of Verwers's play in the late 1650s suggests continued interest in the story, giving audiences the opportunity to see the play performed for the first time with an actress in the lead.[13] In terms of revenue, Verwers's play seems to have been on average somewhat more successful than Tengnagel's in their initial runs and, if the revival was indeed of her play, more successful overall.[14]

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family, she converted, once married, to the Remonstrant Church. She was friends with Questiers, but Questiers's first play postdates Verwers's by eleven years, so that cannot be seen as a clear theatrical connection. For her biography, see Els Kloek, "Verwers, Catharina (ca. 1618–1684)," *Digitaal vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, Huygens Instituut voor de Nederlandse Geschiedenis, web, 2014. For a discussion of the issue of marriage and examples of married women writers, see a blog post by Nina Geerdink, "The Phenomenon of the Married Woman Writer in the Dutch Republic," *Early Modern Women: Lives, Texts, Objects*, web, November 2017.

12 In Tengnagel's dedicatory letter dated 14 July 1643, he apologizes to those who see too much of their own work in his book, including Verwers, who, he says, "tried to turn [the story] into a play and show it on stage" ("[De geschiedenis] tot een spel te brengen, en op het tooneel te vertoonen, gepoogt heeft"). M[attheus] G[ansneb] T[engnagel], *Het leven van Konstance, Waer af volgt het tooneelspel, De Spaensche heidin* (Amsterdam, 1643), 167; X4r.

13 The *ONSTAGE* database assigns all five performances in the 1650s to Tengnagel. However, based on the listing of roles for the 1658 performance in the *Parsonagieboek* (*Book of Roles*), it is clear that the last of these five performances is definitely of Verwers's play. It seems most likely that all five were of her play, not Tengnagel's. *ONSTAGE: Online Datasystem of Theatre in Amsterdam in the Golden Age*, Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Golden Age, University of Amsterdam. For the listing in the *Parsonagieboek*, see C. N. Wybrands, "De Amsterdamsche schouwburg gedurende het seizoen 1658–1659," *Het Nederlandsch tooneel* 2 (1873) 246–322, esp. 267. Wybrands mistakenly lists the play as Tengnagel's, an attribution that does not appear in the original record, available on-line in the stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief van het Burgerweeshuis 367A, Exploitatie van de Schouwburg 1.2.3.2., nr. 429, fol. 19. See also E. Oey-de Vita and M. Geestink, *Academie en schouwburg. Amsterdams toneelrepertoire, 1617–1665* (Amsterdam: Huis aan de drie grachten, 1983), 193. I have explained this discrepancy in more detail in a blog post, "Catharina Verwers: A Mysterious First Playwright," *Early Modern Women: Lives, Texts, Objects*, web, June 2016.

14 De Jeu believes that Verwers's initial run was less successful because Tengnagel produced his play first, but Verwers's play premiered in June and Tengnagel's in September, and the numbers do not bear this out. If we look at the average revenue for each play in *ONSTAGE*,

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Spaensche heydin is not a translation of any identifiable Spanish play. It was unusual at this time for Dutch male and female playwrights to be conversant in Spanish, but it is possible that Verwers read the story in French or commissioned a prose translation. She may even have revised her work after reading Tengnagel's play.[15] However, she certainly and probably primarily used a poetic adaptation of the story by Jacob Cats, who included it in his highly popular 1637 *Trou-ringh* (*Wedding Ring*).[16] Clearly, Verwers engaged in a complex, creative, and intertextual form of writing, possibly using multiple sources in composing the play but following none of them closely. She ultimately revises the female figures in two directions: on the one hand, she reduces their courtliness and presents them in enclosed or pastoral rather than public spaces, but on the other, she also presents the fame of the protagonist in allegorical terms. These contradictory representations show the extent to which the instability of the public-private divide affected public femininity on stage.

In brief, Cervantes's story is a romance narrative, complete with conventional emphases on high social status, temporary loss of identity, and ultimate marriage between social equals. As is true of beggars in the period, the figure of the "gitanilla" was a romanticized, literary construction that bore little relation to real itinerant Romanis in the period, who were persecuted throughout Europe. Dutch authors tended to use the term "heiden" or "pagan" for such traveling communities; the word "zigeuner," while seen occasionally as early

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it appears that Verwers's play took in a bit more revenue than Tengnagel's on average in the 1640s (about 167 guilders versus about 162 guilders), but neither play was especially popular. The performances in the 1650s, presumably of her play, took in an average of about 216 guilders per performance. Cf. Annelies de Jeu, "'Hoe dat een Vrouwen-beelt kan maken zulke Vaarzen': Reacties op de toneelstukken van Catharina Verwers en Catharina Questiers," in *Kort tijt-verdrijf. Opstellen over Nederlands toneel* (*vanaf ca. 1550*). *Aangeboden aan Mieke B. Smits-Veldt*, ed. W. Abrahamse, A. C. G. Fleurkens, and M. Meijer Drees (Amsterdam: A D & L, 1996), 179–84, 180–81.

15 Kloek, "Verwers, Catharina." Dennis Koopman has published on-line two chapters on the Dutch reception and use of *La Gitanilla* and argues that there is no evidence Verwers used Cervantes at all. *Cervantes, Cats en de Amsterdamse Schouwburg. De geschiedenis van een Spaans zigeunermeisje*, web, 2008.

16 This is the conclusion of the second of two chapters by Koopman, *Cervantes*. Cervantes's novella was translated into Dutch in 1643 by Felix van Sambix, although his translation probably postdates the composition of Verwers's play. Cats's version appeared originally in *'s Werelts begin, midden, eynde, besloten in den Trou-ringh, met den Proef-steen van den zelven* (*The World's Beginning, Middle, End, Contained in the Wedding Ring, with the Touchstone of the Same*; Dordrecht: Kannewet, 1637), vol. 3, Nnn4r–Ttt4v; 471–520. The full title is "Selfsaem Trou-geval tusschen een Spaens edelman, ende een heydinne; Soo als de selve edelman, ende alle de werelt doen geloofde" ("Rare case of marriage between a Spanish nobleman, and a pagan; Such as the same nobleman, and the entire world then believed").

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as the sixteenth century, was not common usage until after the early modern period.[17] Cervantes's story centers on Preciosa, a young woman who, it turns out, is in fact noble: she was kidnapped as a young child by an older itinerant woman, called Majombe in Cats's version, who pretends to be her grandmother. A nobleman named Don Juan falls in love with her and is told he may marry her on condition that he join the travelers for a certain period of time. A rich lady falls in love with Don Juan in his "gypsy" disguise and, when he rejects her advances, plots to have him falsely accused of theft in front of a local magistrate. When insulted by a soldier about the theft, Don Juan kills the man in a fit of anger, only to end up facing a murder as well as a theft charge. In the climactic final part of the story, Preciosa pleads for Don Juan's life to the local magistrate, who turns out to be her own father. All is revealed, everyone is forgiven, and in quick succession, Preciosa is reunited with her parents and married to Don Juan.

The relationship between public and private is configured in this story primarily through the category of the visible, with increased visibility for the female protagonist as an indicator of a powerful public presence.[18] In a traditional absolutist society, respectable public femininity was elite femininity, marked by the display of noble virtue as well as elegance and sophistication, making visible performance key; other forms of female visibility were associated with prostitution and the marketplace. Changing Protestant emphases on domesticity led to the formulation of a new ideal, which emphasized modesty, humility, and devoutness over high class; along with this came, predictably, a current of anti-courtliness, commonly seen in Dutch literature by Reformed writers. Exemplarity for women had been aligned with nobility and class-based virtue but would be shifted to religiosity as the crucial component of the ideal. All three Dutch versions of the story of the Spanish pagan, written by Protestants for a Dutch audience, reformulate their leading lady in the direction of the new ideal, but the result is divergent, placing these texts on the fault line between new ideologies of domesticity and older views of noble virtue.

Verwers's play most self-consciously stages the tension between these different feminine ideals, inviting the audience to reflect on representations of

17 The Geïntegreerde Taalbank (GTB), which includes historical dictionaries of Dutch online, cites E. Buys's *Nieuw en volkomen woordenboek van konsten en wetenschappen* (*New and Complete Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, 1769–1778), an eighteenth-century dictionary that says "zigeuners" are "Commonly called Pagans" ("Gemeenelyk Heidens genaamt").

18 See Jeff Weintraub for a useful discussion of the multiple definitions of public and private. "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, ed. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1–42.

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women in public and private settings. Her relationship to other versions of the story can be examined through three of its sections: the scenes prior to the meeting with Don Juan (Don Jan in the Dutch versions), the first meeting of the lovers, and the happy ending in marriage. Preciosa, spelled variously as Pretiosa (Cats), Pretioze (Tengnagel), and Pretiose (Verwers), is in each version known for her engaging dancing and singing skills, which have given her a reputation that transcends the immediate community of "gypsies." Cervantes presents her fame in the opening section of the novella as straightforwardly courtly, and it is here that we encounter Preciosa in her most comfortably public form. Her initial appearances are public spectacles: she dances and sings at occasions such as the Festival of Santa Ana, where she attracts a crowd of "more than two hundred persons."[19] This is where Don Juan sees her and falls in love. In the novella, Preciosa's visibility, a traditional component of noble public femininity, does not make her seem sexually suspect, even though her "grandmother" profits from these performances. Instead, spectators remark on her nobility, grace, and courtliness; she is known to be "extremely pleasing and courteous in conversation," and in addition to her "sprightliness," there is "so much genuine decorum in her manner" that she remains within the bounds of proper morality.[20] She is witty and able to speak her mind before crowds and even in the house of a stranger in front of a group of men she does not know, in a complex setting that is semi-private and therefore perhaps more dangerous than a public stage. When a fellow traveler expresses her apprehension at entering the house, Preciosa answers, "what you have to beware of is one man alone; where there are so many there is nothing to fear. Of one thing you may be sure, … the woman who is resolved to be upright, may be so amongst an army of soldiers."[21] In brief, then, she thrives before an audience, even when it is composed of men, as a typical romance heroine whose nobility shines through her supposedly marginal class status in a public manner. It is her natural courtliness that prevents sexualization of her performances.

As might be expected of Protestant authors, Cats, Tengnagel, and Verwers change their leading lady's prominence at the outset by shifting away from an emphasis on entertaining courtly performance towards a more modest, less public ideal.[22] In *Trou-ringh*, Pretiose still arouses general admiration, yet Cats

19 I have used a modern translation. Miguel de Cervantes, "The Little Gipsy Girl," *The Exemplary Novels of Cervantes*, trans. Walter K. Kelly (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2014), 223–93, 226.

20 Ibid., 223–224.

21 Ibid, 228.

22 Verwers's parents were Anabaptists, though she converted on her marriage to the Remonstrant church (based on Arminianism). For her parents, see A. Blaauw, "Over de

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presents her as widely known for her chastening influence, not her dancing and singing. Cervantes emphasizes that his leading lady does not perform in ways that are not respectable, and she does not "permit those in her company to sing immodest songs."[23] In Cats's retelling, she transforms the other "gypsies" equally thoroughly. Their respect for her is shown in the fact that "One does not hear a loose word if she is present," and he highlights her condemnation of their "dishonest activity."[24] Cats's heroine is exceptional for her knowledge of palmistry, astrology, and medicine, which makes people seek her out. He sets the first meeting of the two lovers in a forest, where Don Jan loses his way during a hunt and encounters the singing young woman.[25] Reflecting on her lack of courtliness, he says, "If this pagan child … / Were to be displayed in front of us dressed in courtly fashion, / Where would her beauty go?"[26] The larger work stresses the importance of compatibility over social standing in choosing a marital partner, so Cats shows Don Jan to be impressed, not by any public performance or courtly display, but by Pretiosa's goodness and "extraordinary mind."[27] When Don Juan woos her in Cervantes, Preciosa imposes the terms of their marriage, and she later reveals that although others have decided she will be married to him, the conditions are her own: "I have decreed, in accordance with the law of my own will, which is the strongest of all."[28] In Cats, by contrast, she begins by modestly rejecting him. She blushes, faults her admirer for being "full of false courtly tricks," and assures him that she knows "the nature of cunning praise."[29] Combining modesty with a strong moral voice, she proudly proclaims her chastity. "Go," she tells him, "to the lustful court, and stroke the silk skirts, / Seek there adequate material for your illicit joy, / And leave me the

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Waterlands doopsgezinde schilder Abraham de Verwer van Burchstraete, over zijn vrouw Barbara van Sillevoirt, en iets over zijn vroegste werken," *Doopsgezinde bijdragen* 31 (2005): 75–91.

23 Cervantes, "The Little Gypsy Girl," 225.

24 The original reads, "Men hoort geen dertel woort als syder is ontrent" and she punishes "het vuyl bejagh." Cats, *Trou-ringh*, Ooor; 473.

25 The scene became popular in paintings at the time. See Ivan Gaskell, "Transformations of Cervantes's 'La Gitanilla' in Dutch Art," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982): 263–70.

26 "Wel of dit heydens kint … / Eens op syn hoofs gekleet voor ons ten toone stont, / Waer sou haer schoonheyt gaen?" Cats, *Trou-ringh*, Ppp3r; 485.

27 The original phrase is "ongemeen verstant"; ibid., Ppp3r; 485.

28 Cervantes, "The Little Gypsy Girl," 258.

29 The original phrases are "vol hooffsche treken" and "den aert van 't listigh prijsen"; Cats, *Trou-ringh*, Ppp3v; 486.

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noble pledge of my chaste youth."[30] It is not until then that he proposes marriage; she promptly changes her mind and informs him of the two-year test he must undergo, which amounts to a demand for his rejection of the court and its customs. Thus, Cats does not deny his leading lady a public reputation, but he bases it on her morality, insight into others, and wisdom. In her private conversations, he is careful to highlight her repudiation of courtly femininity, which is presented as unchaste. The young "pagan" is the focal point of male desire, but this desire must be corrected and adjusted to confirm her chastity.

Verwers adopts several of Cats's changes, including the hunt, but also adds significant alterations of her own. As is true for Tengnagel's play, she gives Pretiose no public appearances prior to the meeting with Don Jan. In Tengnagel, the opening scene features a lengthy discussion between Pretioze and Majombe on whether or not God will protect her from harm in the forest, as they contemplate ancient examples of virgins and others beset by male lust and animal attack. The shift away from public scenes is even stronger in Verwers's version. She cuts the opening section completely, going straight to Pretiose's first meeting with Don Jan. This alters her protagonist's public presence in complex ways. Obviously, she reduces our sense of Pretiose as a performer in favor of an emphasis on her status as a love object for Don Jan. But at the same time, unlike in Tengnagel, her Pretiose is still given a theatrical entrance. Where we first become acquainted with her through her intimate conversations with Majombe in Tengnagel's play, we hear her sing "*from within*" in Verwers's text. Don Jan responds to the beautiful sound, upon which she enters singing and praying to Apollo to help her win an award for song and dance, which, as she explains a little later, will be given out at a festival.[31] The impressive entry in Verwers emphasizes Pretiose's ability to excel at public occasions. This young woman is not engaged in palm reading or in witty discourse, but placed firmly within a classical, pagan context, reducing her exoticism and aligning her story with ancient pastoral conventions that present her in enclosed, outdoor settings but nonetheless feature performances of sorts.

In the conversation that follows, Verwers adopts the anti-court sentiment from Cats, even coming close to his language at key moments. Don Jan's first response upon seeing her, "O if one might adorn this Virgin in courtly fashion, /

30 She tells him, "Gaet naer het dertel hof, en streelt de sijde rocken, / Soeckt daer bequame stof voor u ongure vreught, / En laet my 't edel pant van mijn reyne jeught"; ibid., Ppppr – Ppppv; 487–88.

31 The original stage direction reads, "PRECIOSE *singht van binne*." Katarina Verwers van Dusart, *Spaensche heydin, blyspel* (Amsterdam: Lescaille, 1657), A2v; 4. All quotations are taken from this second edition of the play.

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Where would her beauty go, where would it sway to?" is one of a number of striking verbal echoes.[32] Verwers's heroine denounces courtly wooing in much the same terms as she uses in Cats, although her language is purged of any reference to sexuality: "go stroke the silken clothing, / And leave my chastity, to adorn my limbs; / I hate your flattery, go spend it at the Court."[33] Verwers leaves out Cats's direct references to lust, and she formulates the rejection as hatred instead, making her lady morally more forceful. These moral pronouncements on courtly wooing and flattery, however, are joined with a more passive stance, as seen for instance in the fact that in this version alone, it is not Pretiose but Majombe who formulates the conditions for the marriage. Yet, Pretiose's second entry in Verwers is even more theatrical than the first: again she enters singing in praise of Apollo, now followed by a group of female "gypsies," all covered in laurel, having won the prize at the festival. Don Jan, who has decided he is willing to give up his status and wealth for her, compliments her in terms that reject courtly femininity and present her as his "Earthly goddess," but she still berates him, "You flatter me in too much of a courtly way."[34] Thus, her character combines divine beauty and performance with a moralistic rejection of the court and humble modesty, at times reflected in her use of diminutives and down-to-earth turns of phrases. These revisions in the central character deemphasize her courtly fame in Cervantes's version and her reputation for wisdom in Cats's. Pretiose shines in front of large audiences in performances that Verwers refers to but does not show. Yet, she still sings, dances, and praises the pagan gods on stage, giving her character a religious presence, albeit a pagan one, that she does not have in other versions of the story.

These revisions by Verwers make Pretiose an embodiment of classical ideals, a fundamentally different approach than that found in Cats or Tengnagel. The latter turns her into a Protestant and has her sing anti-Catholic songs. Cats, whose concern is with religious compatibility, never has her worship pagan gods or explicitly convert to Christianity. Her father's lengthy speeches praising God for her return in *Trou-ringh* indicate that she is easily transferred from the heathen sphere of the pagans into a proper Christian marriage because of her innate virtue. By contrast, Verwers shows her leading lady singing to the pagan gods and adorned with laurels. Thus, Verwers constructs a feminine ideal that is modest, morally strong, respectable, and largely placed in fairly intimate

32 "Ach datmen dese Maeght eens op sijn Hofs ginck sieren, / Waer sou haer schoonheydt gaen, waer sou die niet heen swieren?" Ibid., A3r; 5.

33 She tells him, "gaet streelt het sy gewaet, / En laet mijn reynigheydt, tot siersel mijner leden; / Ick haet u vleyery, gae die ten Hof besteden." Ibid., A4r; 7.

34 The original has him call her his "Aerts-godin"; she responds, "Ghy vleyt my al te Hofs." Ibid., B4r; 23.

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rural settings, but capable of performance and the subject of male praise, often in aesthetic and elevated terms. This is the cultural work of pastoral romance, which takes women out of the noble positions due to them by birth and places them within surroundings in which their nobility comes to be appreciated as natural and semi-divine, yet lacking in public impact. A Reformed sensibility is not absent, however, as we have seen in Pretiose's modesty and anti-courtliness in private conversations. To this same end, Verwers also expands the mother of Pretiose from the source texts. In her play alone, Pretiose's mother gets several domestic scenes in which she despairs and mourns the loss of her child, being comforted by her devout maidservant. Through this figure, Verwers is able to infuse the romance narrative with what we might call a broadly Protestant, middle-class, and even domestic sensibility, based in part on a critique of courtly public femininity, in particular in the form it has in Cervantes.

The ending of Verwers's play complicates public femininity further. Cats ends his poem with the line, "And the entire world rejoices because Pretiose is getting married."[35] Although this is a much-reduced version of the description of the festival held at the wedding in Cervantes, Cats nonetheless highlights popular admiration for the young "pagan" and her story. In Cats and Cervantes, her public presence at the end is no longer grounded in her ability to perform, her wisdom, or her wit, but merely in her story and the events as they have unfolded. The contrast with Tengnagel's conclusion, in which several minor servant characters speak more than Pretiose, who only praises God for the happy ending, is stark, as he avoids any strong public voice for his leading lady. Verwers takes a fundamentally different approach. Her *Spaensche heydin* ends with general recognition of Pretiose's story as remarkable, but she gives this recognition the form of a *tableau vivant* or "*vertoning*" ("staging"). Such tableaux were frequently used in early modern Dutch drama, taking the form of a dumb show accompanied by the reading of a short verse, often for the purpose of staging key public moments such as weddings.[36] The play features two of these, printed before the opening of the play but probably performed at the end when they occur in terms of plot. The first depicts the reunion between Don Jan and his father, with the latter forgiving Don Jan for his secret departure from the court and the former presenting his bride to his father. In this *tableau*, Pretiose is present only as private person, accepted into the family by Don Jan's father. The second *tableau* is a version of Cats's final line, as seen in the accompanying verse:

35 "En al de werelt juyght dat Pretiose trout"; Cats, *Trou-ringh*, Ttt2v; 516.

36 For more on these dumb shows in earlier drama, see E. Oey-de Vita, "Vertoningen en pantomimes in vroeg-17e–eeuwse toneelstukken (1610–±1620)," *Scenarium* 8 (1984): 9–25.

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Here weds the beautiful virgin,
Of whom the entire Court speaks;
See yonder dame Fame swirl
With overloud sound,
To lead the praise of this Bride
To the world's end.[37]

The focus is entirely on Pretiose, who is attended by Dame Fame, a female allegory, to foreground her public role, which is now, contrary to the earlier anti-courtly sentiment of the characters, praised and validated by the entire court. She is lifted out of the immediate environment within which she functions as submissive wife-to-be and into the realm of the exceptional and supernatural. This panegyric goes beyond the happy endings in Cats and Cervantes, especially if we consider its staging possibilities. At the Schouwburg, this would have been a metatheatrical moment that breaks with the more realistic drama up to this point, to present Pretiose in way that is both glorifying and, due to the generic disruption, artificial, allowing the audience to reflect on the theater as a location for the presentation of public femininity. The artificiality would have been especially clear when the role of Pretiose was still performed by a cross-dressed male, and, though we can only speculate, might have pointed in new directions for female performance in a theatrical setting once a woman took on the role, including when, as was the case in the revival in 1658, some female roles, such as Pretiose's mother, were still played by men.

By adding this coda to her play, Verwers complicates Pretiose's public presence beyond what we see in other retellings. On the one hand, her presence in public settings has been reduced and her moral stature has an effect primarily on her husband-to-be, who becomes a figure for the respectable redirection of erotic desire for a performing woman. Tellingly, her performances are, on stage at least, only for his benefit. For most of Verwers's *Spaensche heydin*, the remarkable Pretiose is a less publicly visible figure than in Cervantes and Cats, even as she is visible on stage. Yet, the ending, much like the unexpected entry of Cupid in the opening scene, suddenly places the character on a different plane. Verwers gives her a fame beyond the real world and builds on her performative and ritual entrances earlier in the play. Combined with the expanded

37 "Hier trouwt de schoone maeght, / Daer 't heele Hof van waeght; / Siet gins vrouw Fama swieren / Met overhel geluydt, / Om 't lof van dese Bruydt / Aen 's werelts endt te stieren." The word "overhel" is unusual. Verwers, *Spaensche heydin*, *4r.

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mother figure, Verwers uses her protagonist to create a dual representation of Reformed private and allegorized public femininity. The tension between the two forms of femininity, one pointing to the new divisions in public and private favored by Reformers and the other to older, traditional visions of public and private as separate but continuous, is presented without any explicit conclusions. Thus, Verwers invites her audience to reflect on the nature of and conflict between representations of ideal femininity, which were, under the pressure of cultural developments, undergoing deep changes. Agency can be located here not in Verwers's or her characters' disruption of patriarchy or clever use of its regulations and structures, but instead in literary defamiliarization that creates awareness of contradictions between traditional and newer forms of public and private femininity.

2 Questiers: Male and Female Pride

If Verwers's anti-courtly play explores different types of femininity but does not imagine an active public role for women, Catharina Questiers (1631–1669) works with a different set of dramatic conventions that do allow for such a role but define the public realm differently. Her story takes place at court and involves women of royal status, unavoidably implying political importance and grave consequences for their amatory decisions and attractiveness to others. Here too, male desire is directed at a woman in a position of prominence and must reckoned with. Like Verwers, Questiers places the theme of public femininity's relation to sexuality at center stage in order to redirect that desire eventually. The courtly environment means that "public" is defined not primarily as a matter of visibility, as is true in Verwers's play, but as a matter of political influence over others and collective interest. Women at court fulfill socially and politically significant functions, whether or not they are *seen* to do so by larger audiences, by virtue of their marital choices and degree of willingness to align themselves with factions and individuals at court. Royal women must be visible at certain times, but their actions behind the scenes also affect the larger community. Courts are complex settings, incorporating intimate spaces and public rooms, as well as places that can be transformed in a moment from a location of conspiracy to a courtroom. In such an environment, the newer, Reformed understanding of public and private and the notion of the household as a domestic realm simply do not apply. Instead, the public is identified as what is politically significant and within the purview of the ruler and his followers; the private is associated with secrecy, conspiracy, and sexual

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betrayal.[38] For this reason, plays set at a royal court have a tendency to explore the well-known parallel between the family and the state, the cornerstone of patriarchalist thinking all over Europe.[39] Given this political edge to female behavior in a courtly environment, Questiers's play is able to explore a broad range of cultural, political, and literary conventions for public femininity and individual women's responses to and negotiation of those conventions. Her main character has limited public influence, but in the end is forced to give up her personal wishes in favor of her public role. Along the way, she can withstand assaults on her virtue, and political order depends on her chastity and loyalty, but the play makes clear that this apparent agency comes at a cost: her private desires must be abandoned in favor of general order. Thus, her political prominence eventually requires the voiding of what we might construe as her inner or private self.

Questiers was a more prominent author than Verwers. A well-known poet, she wrote three versions of Spanish plays, all staged to some acclaim and most likely written in the full expectation that they would be performed. She came, unlike her predecessor, from a family with strong and clear theatrical connections. Her father, owner of a thriving plumbing business, had been a board member of one of the two main Chambers of Rhetoric and wrote plays for the Nederduytsche Academie (Dutch Academy), a theatrical institution that preceded the founding of the Schouwburg and that was intended to promote Dutch literary production partly by putting on plays in Dutch for the edification of the general population. Questiers herself was friends with some of the country's leading authors such as the famous playwright Joost van den Vondel, a fellow Catholic. Her connections with the Schouwburg, which also included its architect, her brother-in-law Philip Vingboons, may have helped get her plays performed on the stage.[40] The three plays she wrote for the Schouwburg were moderately successful, and her third play, *d'Ondanckbare Fulvius en*

38 McKeon identifies a traditional approach to the relationship of public and private in absolutist representations of the two as parallel and continuous, even as people recognized them as distinct realms; the separation of the two into opposing spheres would gradually happen over the course of the seventeenth century. See McKeon, *Secret History*, xx. Plays that are fascinated with the court explore such traditional models of the relationship between public and private. See my *Early Modern Women's Writing* for an extensive discussion of these issues in writings by English and Dutch women.

39 See McKeon, *Secret History*, for the relationship between patriarchalism and the public-private relationship, especially Chapters 1 and 3.

40 For the most up-to-date information on her biography, see Malou Nozeman, "Questiers, Catharina (1631–1669)," *Digitaal vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, Huygens Instituut voor de Nederlandse Geschiedenis, web, 2014. Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom classify her as a "peripheral poet," that is a playwright with connections to the Schouwburg (28).

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trouwe Octavia (*The Ungrateful Fulvius and Faithful Octavia*) was performed on the occasion of the reopening of the Schouwburg after its renovation in 1665 and therefore attended by large audiences.[41] Her second play, *Casimier, of gedempte hoogmoet* (*Casimir, or Pride Subdued*, 1656) was one of the earliest stage productions to feature Nozeman and thus a public moment of artistic collaboration between women, predating the first performance of Verwers's play with women acting in leading roles. The Amsterdam city council attended the fourth performance of the play.[42]

For *Casimier*, Questiers selected what she thought was a play by Lope de Vega. Here too, our information on the source material is incomplete. We do know that the source for *Casimier* is *Engañar para reynar* (*To Trick to Reign*, 1649), a comedy written most likely by Antonio Enríquez Gómez, a Jewish *converso* playwright.[43] Although it has been proven that Gómez did not live in Amsterdam at any time, it appears that his works circulated among the community of Sephardic Jews living in the city, which could give us insight into how Questiers may have acquired the play, perhaps in manuscript, and how she may have had it translated into prose Dutch.[44] Unfortunately, her

41 The records listed on ONSTAGE show a mixed picture in terms of receipts for her plays, with the highest numbers for the performance of her third play and the lowest for *Casimier*.

42 Ben Albach mistakenly calls Questiers the first female playwright, but seems right in noting that it must have been a special occasion for the magistrates to witness the "play and performance by two female artists." See "Ariana Nooseman ontvangt f 76,50 voor zeventien optredens in de Schouwburg: De eerste vrouw op het toneel van de Schouwburg," in *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden: Tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, ed. R. L. Erenstein et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 234–41, 240. The first three performances got good audiences, perhaps for this reason, but the other four were not as well attended (see ONSTAGE).

43 It should be noted that the play was attributed to others in its own day, including Lope de Vega and Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Jaime Galbarro has helpfully provided me with information about Gómez in a private communication. He indicates that the play was most likely written originally in the 1630s, but cautions about overconfident attribution to Gómez. The main biographical source on Gómez is I. S. Révah's *Antonio Enríquez Gómez: Un écrivain Marrane* (*v. 1600–1663*), ed. Carsten L. Wilke (Paris: Chandeigne, 2003), which argues throughout against the long-standing misconception that Gómez lived and ended his life in Amsterdam.

44 Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom provide further detail on prose translation from Spanish into Dutch, in particular on the intriguing translator Jacobus Baroces, who produced prose versions of Spanish plays for different playwrights for the Schouwburg (32–35). They do not mention him in connection with Questiers, but given his Jewish background and connection with the Jewish community in Amsterdam, it is possible he was responsible for writing a prose version of this play. I have not been able to find a contemporary French translation that she could have used.

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dedicatory letter is vague on her source. She merely notes that she has adapted the text into a rhymed play, ensuring that the Spanish original has been, as she puts it, "reformed after the style of our Dutch Stage and Language."[45]

The play tells the story of Casimier, an illegitimate son who has usurped the Polish-Hungarian throne of his legitimate brother, Ladislaus. The latter has been missing since Casimier tried, unsuccessfully, to assassinate him. Everyone believes Ladislaus is dead, including his former beloved Clorinde (most likely played by Nozeman). She rebuffs many attempts by the evil title character at courting her, swearing she will remain faithful to his brother to keep a promise she has made to their father on his deathbed. By contrast with Pretiose, who is generally accompanied by Majombe, in *Casimier*, the female protagonist is tested in the absence of any protection, parental or male. Ladislaus himself is in hiding, living as a shepherd and secretly married to Irene, a young daughter of a nobleman he met in the woods. In order to regain the throne, Ladislaus decides to approach Clorinde covertly and pretend he still wants to marry her so she will help him displace his bastard brother. Irene, who has tried in vain to persuade her husband to stay in the woods with her, secretly follows him on his clandestine mission to the court to spy on her husband. Meanwhile, incensed by Clorinde's rejection, Casimier decides to rape and if necessary kill her in the middle of the night. Helped by Clorinde and an assortment of nobles, Ladislaus confronts his brother and overpowers him. Once crowned again, Ladislaus reveals the truth of his marriage to Irene in front of Clorinde, who understands the need for his deceit. In a final surprise move, Ladislaus gets Clorinde to marry Casimier, giving his brother and Clorinde the Hungarian half of the kingdom and ruling over the Polish half himself.

As is clear from this summary, *Casimier* is more political than *Spaensche heydin* in its concern with proper reign and exposure of tyranny as a consequence of both political and personal moral flaws, but it also includes pastoral scenes of a more romantic kind. Gómez's original play does not appear to have been written for public performance, considering its style and long speeches.[46] Whether or not his play was performed, it is clear that Questiers felt she had to adjust the text to make it more suitable to the Amsterdam stage: she cut down

45 Catharina Questiers, *Casimier, of gedempte hoogmoet. Bly-spel* (Amsterdam: Smit, 1656), ar. She calls the play "naa de stijl van ons Neederduyts-Toneel en Taal hervormt."

46 Not much research has been done on this play. Glen F. Dille has not found any evidence of performance, though he does see the play as viable for stage production. But the length of some of the speeches suggests that it was possibly written in this form for a reading audience. "The Originality of Antonio Enríquez Gómez in *Engañar para reinar*," in *Renaissance and Golden Age Essays in Honor of D. W. McPheeters*, ed. Bruno M. Damiano (Potomac: Scripta Humanistica, 1986), 49–60, esp. 50.

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some of the speeches, added minor figures and scenes, and wrote more detailed stage directions. Most conspicuously, unless she was using an unknown source, the first act is Questiers's own, making it problematic to designate her play as a translation as opposed to an adaptation – terms that appear in any case difficult to separate, given translation practices and the likelihood of intermediate prose translation at this time.[47] Throughout the play, Questiers asks her audience to compare Clorinde and Irene and their perspective on the political arena of the court and to examine their status as women in a vexed position determined by their relationship to men in power. In presenting us with Clorinde and Irene, Questiers explores the complexity of the boundaries between the public and private spheres for courtly women.

Questiers's changes to Gómez's play reveal her interest in public femininity. Gómez opens with a pastoral scene in which Iberio (his Ladislaus) and Elena (Irene) express their love for each other during their first meeting, a situation which bears some resemblance to the meeting of Don Jan and Pretiose: in each case a male courtier falls in love with a young woman in a pastoral setting, testing his identity and allegiance to the court and its corrupt temptations. This association of Iberio with the court and Elana with the countryside replicates conventional gendered divisions between public and private, defined not merely in terms of visibility but also as public office and retirement; the traditional association of privacy with secrecy and lack of public office is thus confirmed. By contrast, Questiers upsets these gendered divisions by opening with a scene in which Clorinde discusses the political crisis with the nobles, followed by an unsuccessful attempt by Casimier to woo her in front of everyone. The coronation of Casimier is shown, a scene that opens the second act in Gómez, immediately followed by another confrontation between Casimier and Clorinde. These scenes, which precede the pastoral romance in Questiers, make the play more political from the outset but also, crucially, present Clorinde's public stature and virtuous steadfastness as central to the events that unfold.

Unlike her counterpart in Gómez, Clorinde quarrels with the nobles, who have allowed Casimier to displace his brother only for the sake of gaining

47 All versions I have consulted, including the 1649 printing and two manuscript versions available on digitally on the *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica*, have the same opening act. Citations from Gómez's play are taken from its earliest printing: *Engañar para reynar*, in *Doze comedias las mas famosas que asta aora han salido de los meiores, y mas insignes poetas*, vol. 3 (Lisbon, 1649), Mr – O7v; 151–196. The manuscripts are attributed to Gómez in the *BDH*; the signatures are MS/17011 and MS/15080, the latter dated 1720. A later printing of the play, dated 1762, has the same opening, but the attribution is to Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

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peace after much suffering. In a stern moral tone, she deplores their weakness: "Alas! will it then come to pass / That in this fruitful land a Bastard shall rule! / Miserable Kingdom, what shame will come upon you."[48] With a strong voice that contrasts with the vacillating behavior of the men around her, she predicts that they will be punished, calls Casimier a tyrant, and swears that Ladislaus is still alive. Stanislaus reveals that Casimier loves her, but she immediately claims that she promised the brothers' father to marry and rule with Ladislaus and will not relent. In a short private scene with her lady-in-waiting Usebia (a character not in the original play), Clorinde expresses her undying love to Ladislaus in response to Usebia's advice to take Casimier's hand in marriage. When Usebia reminds her Casimier is Ladislaus's brother, she yet again denounces illicit sexuality and declares, "No bastard shall ever mix his blood with mine."[49] Political and sexual illegitimacy are paralleled, and Clorinde's chaste constancy matches her political virtue, creating an exemplary female presence at the heart of the court, with what strikes us as a cohesive public and private presence.

This cohesiveness is enhanced by the variety of settings for Clorinde's confrontations with Casimier. First, we see her stand up to Casimier in a private conversation with him, asserting proudly that she has never been ruled by "staatssucht" (desire for power) and that she will not bow to his "minsught" (desire for love), calling herself as steadfast and unchangeable as a rock.[50] The subsequent coronation scene repeats the argument between Casimier and Clorinde, this time in a public setting in front of the nobles. For Casimier, it is the first test of his power, and it ends in humiliation, followed by his degeneration into tyranny, which happens seemingly in response to these clashes with Clorinde. The varied settings and repeated conflicts imply that Clorinde's behavior, unlike that of the men at court, is virtuous no matter who is present. She moves seamlessly in and out of public and private spaces, willing to take Casimier on in front of other courtiers and reject him even when faced with him on her own. By Act Three, Casimier has isolated himself entirely: he denies all petitions from citizens, including one from Clorinde herself asking to be allowed to enter a monastery. He responds with a threat to burn the monastery and kill her. She is not fazed by his violence, functioning as an example and inspiration to some of the nobles, who finally conclude that Casimier must

48 "Helaes! zal't dan geschien / Dat in dit vruchtbaar land een Bastart zal gebieden! / Elendigh Koninghrijck, wat smaat zal u geschieden." Questiers, *Casimier*, Ar.

49 "Geen bastaart zal zijn bloet, oyt mengen onder't mijn"; ibid., A2r.

50 Ibid., A2v.

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be removed and killed. Her steadfastness, in other words, has real public and political impact.

More surprisingly, Clorinde's virtue contrasts not only with the behavior of men at court but also with the deceptive conduct of her beloved, the rightful King, which means that there is no male model of virtuous rule. While Clorinde impresses us with her honesty at court, Ladislaus is persuaded by Segismond, the stadholder of Poland, of the need to hide his marriage with Irene so that he can get Clorinde to help him return to the throne. In Gómez's play, the King is, as Glen Dille has argued, reprehensible and partly motivated to retreat into the woods by an inexplicable hatred of Isbela and a lack of responsibility.[51] Questiers does not make him as culpable as Gómez. For instance, she changes the King by not showing his first meeting with Irene, which gives the impression that his primary motivation for retirement is romantic rather than unexplained hatred for Clorinde. Moreover, in both plays, the title has a double meaning, but Questiers's use of the title is less focused on the King. Gómez's title, *To Trick to Reign*, applies to Casimir, but also to Iberio, both of whom use trickery. In *Casimier*, the title is doubly relevant in a different way. The label of pride ("hoogmoet"), of which Casimier is generally accused, is used by Casimier himself to talk about Clorinde, and he is not the only one to apply the word to her. When Segismond counsels Ladislaus, he notes that they need Clorinde's support but first, "Her pride must be subdued, through cunning but not by force."[52] The play gives no indication that she might shift her allegiance so easily. Instead, the suspicion reflects badly on Ladislaus himself, who goes on to deceive Clorinde *and* Irene in order to regain the throne. Clorinde's plotting on his behalf, by contrast, is laudable, consisting in preparing the nobles for battle and hiding him in an emergency. Ladislaus's conviction that there is a need to subdue her pride, in other words, shows that political expediency affects him morally. But it also suggests the potential for seeing "pride" as a term that covers different forms of behavior that must, however virtuous its motivation, be controlled for the sake of public harmony.

Questiers uses the character of Irene to offer a reflection on women's place in the public realm of courtly politics, suggesting that her attitude to courtly femininity is fundamentally at odds with Verwers's. Unlike Clorinde, Irene is uncomfortable at court and leaves her secluded life in the woods only reluctantly. Her life in hiding with Ladislaus, in a space that is romanticized but also

51 Dille, "The Originality," 52ff.

52 "Haar hoogmoet dient gedemt, door list maar met geen macht"; Questiers, *Casimier*, E2v. Although El Condestable calls her "altiva" or proud, this line does not occur in Gómez. Gómez, *Engañar para reynar*, N8v; 182.

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depicted realistically as populated with farmers like the comic Smolsky and his girlfriend Flora, shows that similar to Verwers's Pretiose, this young rural noblewoman is virtuous because she is anti-courtly. Rightly suspecting her husband, she decides to go to the court secretly to spy on her beloved Ladislaus and Clorinde. Once there, Irene must learn to conquer her jealousy in favor of his quest to regain the throne. At a crucial moment, when armed parties are gathering on both sides and Ladislaus is about to confront his brother, she suggests that they return to the woods together and leave the evil Casimier to rule: "seek rest with me / A cattle's pasture, that gives more pleasure / Than the Royal command."[53] Although her pastoral sentiment is to some extent laudable, her mistaken desire to stay out of the public realm must be rejected as part of a learning process that will eventually qualify her for a position as queen. In this sense, she is, like Pretiose, eventually removed from the natural environment, but her anti-courtly attitude cannot persist. Her remarks also show that not all virtuous women fit readily into public roles, suggesting that Clorinde's natural ability to lead and speak openly at court sets her apart.

More explicitly than her source, Questiers's play explores the need for noble women to harmonize the conflict between personal feelings and public roles by subduing their own desires, particularly once they are married. We can also see Ladislaus's decision to marry Clorinde to his brother, her would-be rapist and murderer, in this light. Although Casimier promises to become a deserving husband, there is little in the play that indicates this is likely. The marriage is essentially concluded between the men as a political arrangement that will allow them both to rule, with Clorinde and Irene as their queens. Like Verwers, Questiers stages her conclusion about public femininity in three *vertoningen*. Female personifications of Justice, Peace, and Virtue manage to bind all parties to each other and reconcile the four individuals involved. Justice threatens Casimier, but is appeased by Peace; Virtue crowns Irene and provides unity to all by bringing down anger and desire for power and chasing hatred (possibly another personification) away. Clorinde's virtue and loyalty are mentioned first as the reason for Casimier's survival and second as the source of her reward, the crown. We learn that forgiveness is vital to the happy ending as the final lines read, "Thus must he, who can be rewarded by virtue, forgive evil, / Experience high old age, with peace here."[54] The grammar is somewhat ambiguous, but the centrality of forgiveness and the rewards for loyalty suggest that the pride

53 She tells him, "zoeckt met my de rust, / Het weyde van het vee, dat geeft veel meerder lust. / Als't Koninckl ijck gebiet." Questiers, *Casimier*, G2r.

54 "Zoo moet hy, die de deugt ken loone, 't quaat vergeeve, / Een hooge ouderdom, met vreede hier beleeven." Ibid., H2r.

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that has been subdued is not just Casimier's but also Clorinde's, in spite of the male pronoun used. The play leaves it a question if public femininity is capable of reforming the courtly arena: even though Casimier repents, the rightful king has deceived to gain power and restore order. Still, in spite of her apparent failure to change her political environment in a fundamental way, Clorinde represents a feminine ideal, remaining firm within her convictions for as long as she is able to, and Irene learns to emulate her example. That Clorinde consents to marry Casimier is a sign not only of her loyalty to the King but also of her willingness to forgo her own longings for the sake of public peace and her continued public presence, which will gain a new form once she is married.

Questiers is more interested in the conflict between public and private roles for women than Verwers, but she too conspicuously refuses to resolve all the problems her play brings up. Rather than denying the value of female courtliness in favor of an allegorical ideal, she addresses its complexity. This is possible because the public is not defined in terms of visibility and pleasing performance, but in terms of political influence. Ultimately, her leading women have to deny their private selfhood in favor of assigned political and public roles. While such a forced choice seems to indicate a loss of the romantic values espoused in Verwers's play, their ability to do so marks them as virtuous, and they end up performing a public service that is celebrated as an indication of a general change for the better.

We do not have records of actors for the season when *Casimier* was first performed, but it seems likely that Nozeman would have performed Clorinde, marking her theatrical appearance as a touchstone of public integrity. As Clorinde, she is threatened by disruptive male sexuality – exactly the kind of erotic response elicited by female publicity on stage – but she transforms it by suppressing her own desire for the sake of order and general peace. Thus, she fulfills a public function that is based on her role as royal female.

The engraved frontispiece in the printed edition of the play (Fig. 5.1) offers an interesting visual gloss on these issues. It is an unsigned image of the closing scene, set in the Amsterdam Schouwburg. It is a possibility that Questiers, who certainly signed other engravings, made it herself, though in the absence of a signature we can only speculate. It does, at the least, seem probable that she would have approved of the image as accompaniment to her play. The engraving shows what is perhaps an image of Nozeman herself as Clorinde, who is calmly standing by while the men fight, holding her hands in a position of prayer but with a slight smile that reveals her controlled demeanor. She is not in the center of the image like the three males or in the light like the men and the allegorical female figure in the background. Instead, she appears half in the shadows, drawing the viewer's eye to her reaction to the male spectacle in spite

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MENTEM MORTALIA TANGUNT.
Geval is eind' lyck moe de Poolse Vorst te plaage
doet hem, naa veel Ramp en Hoon, de Kroon weeroraagen
lorind' en Sigismont, zyn weederkomst bestempt
ies, Casimiers verraat en Hooghmoet wert gedempt.

FIGURE 5.1 Anon., title page engraving for Catharina Questiers, *Casimier of gedempte hoogmoet. Bly-spel* (Amsterdam, 1656), Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague

of her own modesty. This perfectly encapsulates women's double relationship to the male-dominated public realm in the play: Clorinde is important to resolving the conflict at the heart of the image, but marginalized visually at the same time, enabling her to contemplate the men from a position of moral superiority.

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The plays by Verwers and Questiers tell us that the earliest Dutch female dramatists wanted to represent publicly significant women to interrogate ideals of and ideas about public femininity. However virtuous the women in these plays may be, they do not achieve political agency because of it. Verwers reduces her female protagonist's reputation from what it is in her sources, even though she does represent her singing and dancing, which gives her a measure of public visibility, but Verwers stages these performances mainly in "private" settings. Pretiose's exemplarity is thus not primarily measured by her publicity but instead resides in her rejection of female courtliness, making her representative of the new Reformed ideals of womanhood. All the same, the play becomes ambivalent by the end, when Pretiose's fame is staged allegorically, so that she can be adored as passive presence, rather than as a conscious agent. This aligns her character with traditional absolutist imaginations of women as public paragons of virtue, whose influence is due to their nobility and physical presence, not to their actions and speech.

Questiers also offers a complex presentation of her leading ladies. Irene leaves the rural environment only reluctantly to assume a position at court, foregoing her anti-courtliness of necessity, whereas Clorinde, whose political influence and significance is considerable at first, must agree to a marriage that preserves peace but does not match her personal wishes or virtuous character. Clorinde is potentially a politically active and effective protagonist, but her agency must ultimately be contained by her environment, her "pride subdued." These ambivalent endings to the comedies should be read as contributions to the lively debates on the divisions between public and private and their impact on women in the Low Countries. What connects them is that in each case, women's voices disappear upon marriage; they are virtuous in withstanding unruly and even violent male sexual desire, but once paired up take up positions that deny them individuality outside of public perceptions. Thus, while Verwers and Questiers do not defy patriarchal restrictions imposed on women explicitly, we can see them exploring what Howell identifies as the contradictions inherent in patriarchy itself. While there are fundamentally conservative aspects to their plays and the genre in which they wrote, they put forward a possibility for reflection on public femininity as well as the complexity, variety, and inadequacy of male treatments of women. While these women playwrights could not yet imagine a coherent, powerful, and effective female presence, at court or outside it, they nonetheless allowed audiences to consider the intersections between femininity, public action, and sexuality, making playgoers question the conventions by which women were represented.

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CHAPTER 6

Anna Francisca de Bruyns (1604/5–1656), Artist, Wife and Mother: a Contextual Approach to Her Forgotten Artistic Career

Katlijne Van der Stighelen

In a sketchbook preserved in the Print Room of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels is a drawing by Anna Francisca de Bruyns. This small self-portrait, drawn in black ink on a sheet measuring 150 × 90 mm, almost seems to present a concise biography. At the bottom of the sheet, scrawled letters resemble first words, *Mon mamam dada*,[1] as though De Bruyns was drawing while a child sat on her knee. Unlike the famous Judith Leyster of Haarlem (1609–1660), De Bruyns continued her artistic practice after her marriage.[2] This raises the question of whether women in general largely abandoned their artistic ambitions once married. In her dissertation on the aptitude of the female mind for science and letters, published in 1641, the learned Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678) even argued that educated women should not be distracted by domestic obligations; instead, they should employ servants and never marry.[3] This assertion notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that during the sixteenth century numerous Netherlandish female artists were married. Agnes van den Bossche (c. 1440–after 1502), Susanna Horenbout

1 Sketchbook of Anna Francisca de Bruyns, inv. no. 6507, fol. 40, black ink on paper, 195 × 165 mm, Brussels Royal Library Print Room. The sketchbook was first mentioned in, Michel Benisovich, "Biographie d'Anne Françoise de Bruyns, peintre, écrite par Jacques Ignace Bullarts son fils," *Oud-Holland* 68 (1953): 179–182. In 1983, Eliane De Wilde, the then Director of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels, published an entry on De Bruyns in *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, X, Brussels, 1983, col. 70–73. In 1997 a master thesis was written under my supervision: Mieke Ackx, *Anne Françoise de Bruyns (1604–1656) '(her)ontdekt': een monografische studie van 'Nostri Miracula Belga' met kritische oeuvre-catalogus*, KU Leuven, Leuven, 1997. See also: Jacques Toussaint (ed.), *Portrait en Namurois* (Namur: Société Archéologique de Namur, 2002), 42.

2 See: James E. Welu & Pieter Biesboer, *Judith Leyster. Schilderes in een mannenwereld*, exhibition cat. (Worcester, Zwolle: Frans Halsmuseum Haarlem-Worcester Art Museum, 1993), 23–24.

3 Caroline van Eck, "The First Dutch Feminist Tract? Anna Maria van Schurman's discussion of women's aptitude for the study of arts and sciences," in *Choosing the Better Part. Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)*, ed. Mirjam de Baar, Machteld Löwensteyn a. o. (Dordecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 44–46.

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FIGURE 6.1 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Self-Portrait with inscription 'Mon maman dada'*, sketchbook, Department of Prints and Drawings, 6507/40r°, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, photo: J. Geleyns – Ro scan

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(active c. 1520–1540), Levina Teerlinck (c. 1520–1576), Mechtelt van Lichtenberg toe Boecop (c. 1520–1598) and Catharina van Hemessen (1528–after 1581) all were married even as they actively pursued their art. Moreover, this tradition continued throughout the seventeenth century. Such artists as Clara Peeters (c. 1580–1657), Margaretha de Heer (before 1603–before 1665), Maria de Grebber (c. 1602–1680) and Susanna van Steenwijck-Gaspoel (c. 1610–after 1653) all seem to have continued their artistic activities while married.[4] However, many women artists, mostly belonging to the upper middle class, remained single.[5] Magdalena de Passe (1587–1643), Geertrui van Veen (1602–1643), Jacoba van Veen (c. 1639–after 1675), Catharina Pepijn (1619–1688) and Michaelina Wautier (1614–1689), to mention just a few, never married.[6] During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was nearly impossible to be formally initiated into an artistic profession as a woman. Lacking both tradition and faith in women's talent, Netherlandish guilds only rarely registered girls or young women as pupils unless they were born into families of artists and already familiar with a craft. Even for middle class women, training in workshops mainly attended by men seems to have been viewed as unacceptable. Educated women with artistic ambition whom came from good families generally received their artistic training from private teachers who tutored them in the women's homes. Because such training and practice occurred at home, these women artists have remained invisible.[7] Nearly no cultivated women had direct access to the entourage of professional painters, and this precluded their becoming *official* artists. It is consequently difficult to uncover the experiences of female

4 Because of the problem of dating their work it is extremely difficult to confirm post-marriage artistic activity. Thanks to the report of Anna Francisca's son we can say with certainty that it is the case with De Bruyns, which makes her case-study all the more interesting.

5 On Clara Peeters, see: Alejandro Vergara (ed.), *De kunst van Clara Peeters*, exhibition cat. Antwerp: Rockoxhuis and Mardrid: Prado Museum (Antwerp: Rockoxhuis, 2016), 13; Jean Bastiaensen, "Finding Clara: Establishing the Biographical Details of Clara Peeters (ca. 1587 –after 1636)" in *Boletin del Museo del Prado*, XXXIV, número 52, 2016, 17–31. See also: Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide (*eds.*), *Singlewomen in the European Past 1250–1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

6 For an overview of women-artists active in The Netherlands during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see: Katlijne Van der Stighelen & Mirjam Westen, *'Elck zijn waerom'. Vrouwelijke kunstenaars in België en Nederland 1500–1950*, exhibition cat. Antwerp: Royal Museum of Fine Arts and Arnhem, Gent: Museum of Modern Art (Brussels: Ludion, 2000), 126–202. Although it remains unclear whether all these married women continued art practice after their marriage there is no archival evidence that they did not.

7 See: Elizabeth Honig, "'Artistieke' vrouwen in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de vroegmoderne tijd," in Katlijne Van der Stighelen & Mirjam Westen, "Elck zijn waerom," 43–57.

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ANNO M DC XXIX ✲ ANNA FRANCISCA DE BRYNS ATATIS XXIIII
Claristima et Eximia pingendi Arte Illustristima Domina, D:
ANNA FRANCISCA DE BRYNS, Nobilissimi ac Gene-
rosissimi Domini D: ISAACI BVLLART Regij Ordinis Equitis,
Regij Vedastinorum Monasterij apud Atrebates Prætoris primarij,
Supremi Montium Pietatis in Flandria et Arteria Præfecti, etc: Conjux,
De sua Effigie à se depicta.

FIGURE 6.2
Wenceslas Hollar after Anna Francisca de Bruyns', *Self-Portrait*, engraving after the prototype of 1629, 1648, MS. 819, f. 425, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lille

artists. Broadly speaking, only scarce biographical information is available and few works can be identified because of the lack of signatures.

De Bruyns is an exception to the rule. She was born into an upper middle-class family and raised by outstanding court artists who happened to be her relatives. Compared to early modern women artists in general, much is known about Anna Francisca de Bruyns. Her son left a unique and never before published autobiographical document that allows a glimpse of her life and career. The main objective of this article is to determine how De Bruyns balanced her artistic drive with her domestic responsibilities, including motherhood. To do so, it is first imperative, however difficult, to present an overview of her paintings and drawings in order to analyse her particular iconography and style.

1 'Siblings' as Mentors

An introduction to the artist herself is in order, and for that we need to examine her familial connections. Anna Francisca de Bruyns was born in 1604 in Morialmé (near Dinant, in the province of Namur) where her father, Cornille de Bruyns, was bailiff. In 1633 at the latest he moved to Mons, becoming the superintendent of the *Bergh van Bermhertichеyt* or public pawnshop, an

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D. IACOBVS FRANQVART Pictor ac Supre-
mus Serenissimorum ALBERTI et ISABELLÆ Bel-
gij Principum Architectus, annos natus 45. a D. ANNA
FRANCISCA DE BRVYNS Cognata ac Discipula sua, an-
nos nata 17. depictus. Anno 1622.

FIGURE 6.3
Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Portrait of Jacques Francart*, 1622, MS. 819, f. 399, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lille

institution founded several years earlier by Wenceslas Cobergher (1557/61–1634).[8] One of Anna Francisca's cousins was Jacques Francart (Rome, 1583–Brussels, 1654). Twenty-two years her senior, he would play an important part in her training.[9] In 1613, when Anna Francisca was nine years old, Francart was appointed court painter to the Archdukes Albert and Isabella. On 27 July 1622, he became Royal Architect-Engineer to Philip IV of Spain.[10] Francart subsequently also took over many of Cobergher's responsibilities.[11]

Both Francart and Cobergher spent many years in Italy. They met in 1591 in Naples, where Cobergher was chiefly occupied as a painter. In 1597 Cobergher

8 See: Paul Soetaert, "De Bergen van Barmhartigheid in de Spaanse, Oostenrijkse en de Franse Nederlanden (1618–1795)," *Historische Uitgaven*, no. 67 (1986): 89–90.

9 On Francart's role as a court painter and architect, see: Annemie De Vos, *Jacques Francart. Premier Livre d'Architecture (1617). Studie van een Zuid-Nederlands modelboek met poortgebouwen*, (Brussels: Académie royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 1998), especially 17–30. For more biographical information: Annemie de Vos, "Hofarchitect Jacques Francart en de Brusselse jezuïetenkerk. Tussen traditie en vernieuwing," *De zeventiende eeuw* 14 (1998): 65–80.

10 Annemie De Vos, *Jacques Francart*, 20–21, 30.

11 On the artistic relationship between Cobergher and Francart, see: Tine Meganck, *De kerkelijke architectuur van Wensel Cobergher (1557/61–1634) in het licht van zijn verblijf in Rome* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1998), 31, 80–96.

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moved to Rome, where, after the death of his first wife, Michaella Cerf, he married Susanna Francart, Jacques's sister and thus Anna Francisca's cousin, in the Church of San Lorenzo on 20 November 1599. The groom was thirty-eight, the bride just sixteen.[12] Cobergher remained in Italy until 1605, when he entered the service of the Archdukes. They paid him three times as much as they would Rubens, which gives us some idea of his prestige. Cobergher quickly became a leading engineer, architect, painter and numismatist. He was the architect of the Basilica of Our Lady in Scherpenheuvel (Montaigu in French), a project that was begun by the Archdukes in 1609 and culminated in the consecration of the basilica in 1627.[13] Anthony van Dyck included Cobergher's portrait in his *Iconography*, a series of engraved portraits of the most eminent contemporary noblemen, intellectuals and artists.[14]

Endogamous alliances continued from one generation to the next. One of Cobergher's daughters, Cécile, married André de Bruyns, a relative of Anna Francisca's father, so that Cécile was simultaneously Anna Francisca's second cousin and aunt. The couple lived in Mons, where André held the office of 'Mayeur de la ville' (mayor or burgomaster) between 1640 and 1650.[15]

2 An Author as a Husband

Thus, from the day she was born, Anna Francisca's parentage and family contacts gave her unusual opportunities to develop her artistic talent. As will become evident, she seized these opportunities with both hands. Three rich sources enable an investigation of the particularities of her life.

First among them is Isaac Bullart's *Académie des Sciences et des Arts*, published in 1682. Bullart (Rotterdam, 1599–Arras, 1672) was a Dutch-born writer who had studied at the Jesuit College in Bordeaux.[16] He and Anna Francisca married in 1628, when she was twenty-four. He spent thirty years collecting material for the two-volume book, which contains 279 biographies of

12 See: Tine Meganck, *kerkelijke architectuur*, 20–23.

13 See: ibid., 52–94.

14 See: Marie Mauquoy-Hendrickx, *L'iconographie d'Antoine van Dyck: catalogue raisonné*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1956), 150, Nr. 77.

15 See: P. De Decker, *Études historiques et critiques sur les Monts-de-Piété en Belgique* (Brussels, 1844), 130–131. The names of eight children of Cobergher (Cathérine, Madeleine, Charles, Cécile, Augustin, Jacques, Marie-Thérèse and Marie Émérence) are registered as heirs of their father's goods. The inventory was made up c. 1645. See: Léopold Devillers, *Notice sur le dépôt des archives de l'État de Mons* (Mons, 1871), 292.

16 See also: J. N. Paquot, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire Littéraire des Dix-Sept Provinces des Pays-Bas*, vol. 3 (Leuven, 1770), 648–650.

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FIGURE 6.4 Lucas Vorsterman after Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait of Wenceslas Cobergher*, c. 1634–1644, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

scholars and artists and is one of the most important biographical compendia of the seventeenth century. In 1647 Anne of Austria, Regent of France for her son Louis XIV, made Bullart a *Chevalier de l'Ordre de Saint-Michel* (Knight of the Order of St. Michael), evidence of the high regard in which he was held.[17] In a

17 For a full overview of Bullart's intellectual activities, see: Anne Delvingt, "L'Académie des sciences et des arts (1682) d'Isaac Bullart et les 'Peintres illustres du Pays-Bas & autres en deçà des Monts," in *L'histoire de l'histoire de l'art septentrional au XVII^e siècle, Collection*

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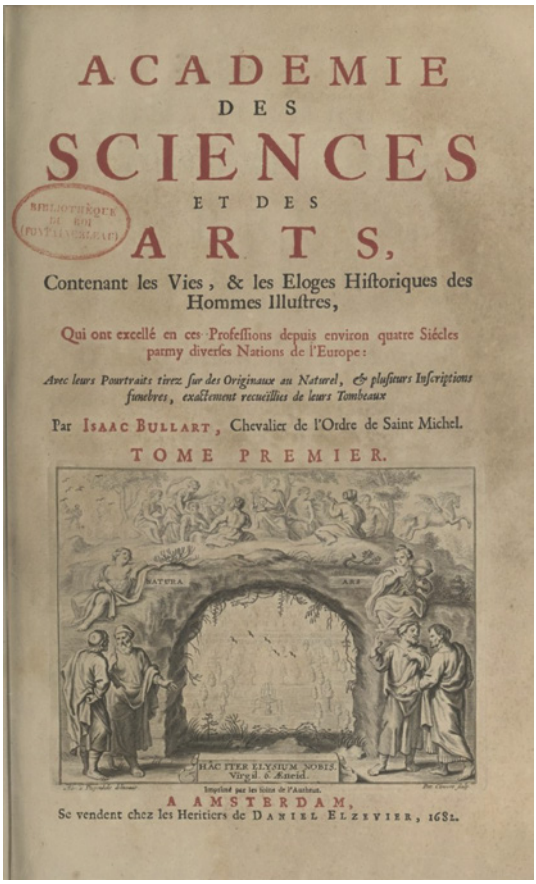
ACADEMIE
DES
SCIENCES
ET DES
ARTS,
Contenant les Vies, & les Eloges Historiques des Hommes Illustres,
Qui ont excellé en ces Professions depuis environ quatre Siécles parmy diverses Nations de l'Europe:
Avec leurs Pourtraits tirez sur des Originaux au Naturel, & plusieurs Inscriptions funebres, exactement recueillies de leurs Tombeaux
Par ISAAC BULLART, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Saint Michel.
TOME PREMIER.
NATURA
ARS
HAC ITER ELYSIUM NOBIS
Virgil. 6 Æneid.
A AMSTERDAM,
Se vendent chez les Heritiers de DANIEL ELZEVIER, 1682.

FIGURE 6.5
Title page of Isaac Bullart, *Académie des sciences et des arts, contenant les vies et les éloges historiques des hommes illustres qui ont excellé en ces professions depuis environ quatre siècles parmy diverses nations de l'Europe, avec leurs portraits tiréz sur les originaux au naturel et plusieurs inscriptions funèbres, exactement recueillies de leurs tombeaux par Isaac Bullart*, volume 1, Amsterdam, 1682

portrait painted by Isaac and Anna's son, Jacques Ignace, in 1648, Bullart wears the insignia of the Order on his breast. The second critical source is a three-part manuscript of Bullart's text in the Municipal Library in Lille, in which Jacques Ignace, who published his father's *Académie*, had made all manner of notes. These are not included in the printed version and, indeed, have never been published in any form.[18] Finally, there is Anna Francisca de Bruyns's

Théories de l'art/ Art Theory (*1400–1800*), ed. Michèle-Caroline Heck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 67–78.

18 Michèle-Caroline Heck, *L'histoire*, 70. See also: A. J. G. Le Glay, *Catalogue descriptif des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Lille* (Lille, 1848), 274; Arthur Dinaux, *Achives historiques et littéraires du Nord de la France*, Valenciennes, vol. 3 (1852), 153–154. From the early fifties onwards Bullart was apparently unjustly the subject of several trials and suffered from financial problems. Going through his biography is not possible within this article although it goes without saying that Anna Francisca de Bruyns suffered from the

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FIGURE 6.6 Jacques Ignace Bullart after Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Portrait of Isaac Bullart*, 1648(?), MS. 819, f. 421, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lille

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sketchbook, preserved in the Print Room of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels. It contains fifty-six pasted-in drawings and sketches, all but a handful by the artist herself. It came into the possession of her son, Jacques Ignace, who added an abridged biography with interesting supplementary details.[19]

3 A Son as an Admirer

A few extremely relevant snippets of biographical information can be gleaned from the *Académie des Sciences et des Arts*, published by Jacques Ignace in 1682, ten years after his father's death.[20] Anna Francisca de Bruyns does not have a separate entry of her own and is mentioned only in the biography of her cousin and mentor Jacques Francart. However, Jacques Ignace appended an extra paragraph to this entry. His authorship is clear from the fact that he describes Anna Francisca as *ma mère*. He refers to her by her maiden name, notes her association with Francart, and cites an important fact:

> It is from [Francart] that Anna Francisca de Bruyns, his niece and my mother, learned how to paint. After he introduced her into this wonderful art, he presented her to the Archduchess Isabella to whom, as a mark of her esteem, she offered the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary in miniature. Isabella thought so highly of the series that she sent it to Pope Paul V because such a gift would appeal to his curiosity.[21]

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worsening of her family too. Because her works are not exactly datable it is impossible to ensure whether there was a relation between her artistic output and less advantageous social situation. See: Paul Huchette, *Lombards et Mont-de-Piété à Arras*, Arras (1914), 63–89.

19 See note 1.

20 Isaac Bullart, *Académie des sciences et des arts, contenant les vies et les éloges historiques des hommes illustres qui ont excellé en ces professions depuis environ quatre siècles parmy diverses nations de l'Europe, avec leurs portraits tiréz sur les originaux au naturel et plusieurs inscriptions funèbres, exactement recueillies de leurs tombeaux par Isaac Bullart*, 2 volumes (Amsterdam-Brussels-Paris, 1682). A second edition was published in Brussels in 1695.

21 Isaac Bullart, II, 484. This quote is, apart from the engraved portrait of Francart after a portrait by De Bruyns on p. 483, the only reference to Anna Francisca de Bruyns. Originally in French: "C'est de luy [Francart] qu'Anne Françoise de Bruyns, ma mère & sa cousine, a apris la Peinture. Aprés qu'il luy eut enseigné ce bel art, il la fit connoistre à l'Infante Isabelle; qui pour marque de son estime voulut avoir les quinze Mysteres du Rosaire peints de sa main en petit; lesquels elle envoya au Pape Paul V. comme un present digne de la curiosité de ce grand Pontife."

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Though brief, these few lines contain essential information: Anna Francisca was taught by Francart and was introduced by him to the Brussels court. The Infanta Isabella thought so highly of her that she bought (or commissioned) from her fifteen small paintings of the *Mysteries of the Rosary*, which she subsequently sent as a gift to Pope Paul V.

Jacques Ignace Bullart was clearly convinced of the importance of this information about his mother, since he wrote four pages about her in the Lille manuscript, with many additional details. It is not impossible that he intended this material to be inserted in a later edition of his father's publication, for in his first sentence he writes:

> Because the paintings by Anna Françoise de Bruyns are highly valued, she deserves to be included by me in this "Academy," not through hollow flattering words but because the memory of a good and virtuous mother who raised and nourished me tenderly does not permit me to be ungrateful or fail to mention her fame as an artist.

Yet at the same time, he clearly realized that he ought not to be overly lavish in his praise, given that she was his mother: "A child should talk soberly about his mother and venerate her with modesty." To demonstrate that he is as objective about her as he is about anyone else, he immediately adds that her work (*son industrie*) is in no way comparable to that of "the great Geniuses of Painting who are celebrated in this book" (*ces grands Genies de la Peinture qui sont celebrer en ce livre*).[22] Thus he neatly resolves his dilemma. In fact, she does not belong in this gallery of great scholars and artists. Nevertheless, in appreciation of her qualities, both as a mother and as an artist, he feels justified in bestowing upon her a modicum of praise. It is also remarkable that he uses the word *industrie*, or diligence, to summarize her artistic activities, as if to stress that his mother had been merely a dilettante.[23]

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22 Annotated Manuscript of *Académie des Sciences et des Arts*, MS 819, f. 413, Lille, Municipal Library: "L'estime que l'on fait des Peintures d'Anna Françoise de Bruyns merite bien que je luy donne rang en cette Académie, non pour l'y faire esclater par les loüages vaines, et suspectes; mais pour rendre ce que je dois à la mémoire d'une bonne, et vertueuse Mere; qui par la tendresse avec laquelle elle m'a éslevé, et nourry de son sein ne me permet point de payer ses soins d'ingratitude, n'y de passer sous silence la renommée qu'elle a acquité par le pinceau'; 'Un enfant doit parler sobrement de sa Mere, et la loüer avec modestie."

23 See on the terminology: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, 'Amateur Art as a social skill and a female preserve: some thoughts on amateur artists of the 16th and 17th centuries', in Delia Gaze (ed.), *Dictionary of Women Artists* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, dl. 1, 1997), 66–80; Ann Bermingham, "The aesthetics of ignorance: The accomplished woman in the culture of connoisseurship," *Oxford Art Journal* 16, 2 (1993): 3–20; Ann Bermingham,

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Among all the artists who are included in the printed version of the *Académie*, only one other woman is mentioned, and that reference is also embedded within a biography of someone else. In the entry on the French painter Simon Vouet, the only French artist in the gallery, Bullart refers to Vouet's wife, Virginie de Vezzo Vellatrano, as "a Roman Lady who was extremely beautiful and very skilled in the art of painting."[24] One gets the impression that, at least in Jacques Ignace's opinion, it was also her beauty that led to her success.

4 A Mother as an Artist

Given the laudatory nature of the rest of Jacques Ignace's handwritten entry on Anna Francisca de Bruyns, we might well surmise that the real point of this introduction was to gain his readers' trust and predispose them towards his mother. Once he arrives at a detailed account of her life and work, it soon becomes a compelling encomium. He begins by describing his mother's artistic talent, which was obvious even when she was a child: *elle s'amusait à tracer avec l'aiguille sur l'escorce tendre de quelques arbres* (she loved to trace [figures] with a needle in the soft tree bark), and some of these reliefs apparently remained in the family for a long time.[25] In March 1616, when she was not yet twelve years old, she made a masterly copy of a print of Mamluke horsemen by Jan Swart

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Learning to draw. Studies in the cultural history of a polite and useful art (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 2000); Philippe Bourdin, "Un public d'amateurs dans la France moderne?" in *Les divertissements utiles des amateurs au XVIII siècle*, (Clermont-Ferrand 2000), 87–108.

24 Isaac Bullart, II, 492. See also: Michèle-Caroline Heck, *L'histoire*, 75: "(…)'Dame Romaine d'une beauté singulière, & si bien instruite en l'Art de peindre, qu'elle eut souvent l'honneur de travailler en la presence du Roy, & de recevoir de sa bouche les loüanges qui estoient deüs aux ouvrages de sa belle main."

25 MS 819, fol. 414, Lille, Municipal Library: "(…) si est-ce que l'on a gardé quelques unes de ces escorches dans la famille comme une rareté , aussy longtemps que les traits de sa main y ont paru." It is surprising to learn that making small reliefs was one of the initial artistic techniques pursued by women of the upper or middle class. Also Anna Maria van Schurman reports in her autobiography that she carved small portraits in wax, alabaster and boxwood. See: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, "'Et ses artistes mains …' The Art of Anna Maria van Schurman," in *Choosing the better part. Anna Maria van Schurman(1607–1678), Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Idées/ International Archives of the History of Ideas*, 146, eds. Mirjam de Baar, Machteld Löwensteyn, Marit Monteiro en Agnes A. Sneller (Dordrecht-Boston-London, 1996), 55–68; Desmond M. Clarke, "Anna Maria van Schurman and women's education," *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 138, (2013): 347–360.

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FIGURE 6.7
Jan Swart van Groningen, *Three Mameluk Horsemen*, 1526, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

FIGURE 6.8
Anna Francisca de Bruyns after Jan Swart van Groningen, *Three Mameluk Horsemen*, 1616, MS. 819, f. 417, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lille

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van Groningen (1500–c. 1560), dated 1526.[26] The drawing, a rather unexpected subject for a young girl, is signed and dated at top left: *Anna Fransoize de bruijns an(n)o fecit le 25me de mars 1616*, although she left out van Groningen's caption, *MAMALVCKE*.[27] The young De Bruyns also made pen and ink copies of images of the Virgin and other pious prints.[28] Copying drawings by earlier masters was part of the education of every pupil with artistic ambition and in many cases preceded training in the artist's workshop.[29]

Once she had acquired *cette habitude au desseing* (this skill in drawing) she was sent to Brussels to "polish her skills" (*de pouvoir polir*) under the guidance of her cousin Jacques Francart. He took his tutoring seriously and it was not long before Anna was proficient enough to handle the brush. In 1622 – at the age of seventeen – she made a portrait of Francart on a silver plate. Here, Jacques Ignace notes in the margin that it is the same one that you see in

26 The drawings are inserted (glued) in the manuscript by Isaac Bullart for his 1682 posthumously published book *Académie des Sciences et des Arts*, part 3, preserved in MS 819, f. 417, Lille, Municipal Library.

27 MS 819, fol. 417, Lille, Municipal Library. In the margin J. I. Bullart added 'Les trois Persans sont à la page suivante', where indeed the drawing has been glued into the manuscript.

28 MS 819, fol. 414, Lille, Municipal Library: "(…) elle s'amusait (…) avec la plume sur le papier, des figures qu'elle tiroit apres les images de la Sainte Vierge, et autres de Piété (…)." Exactly the same remark has been made related to the young Anna Maria van Schurman: "L'an 1620 Elle commenca de son propre mouvement a reprendre le crayon, pour copier quelques pièces d'excellens maistres, que son père avoit dans ses sales, et ayant veu les ouvrages de certain Hoefnagel, qui estoit tres bon peintre en miniature, elle eut l'inclination de l'jmiter, et demanda qu'on luy fournit de couleurs." See: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, *Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678) of 'Hoe hooge dat een maeght kan in de konsten stijgen'* (Leuven, 1987), 92–93.

29 A unique example of copying after antique sculpture or paintings, drawings or engravings from older and contemporary masters (e.g. sixteenth-century prototypes) is given by Rubens. See: Marjon van der Meulen, *Rubens Copies after the Antique, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard XXIII* (London: Harvey Miller, 1994); Kristin Lohse Belkin, *The Costume Book, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard XXIV* (London-Philadelphia: Harvey Miller-Heyden & Son, 1978), esp. 23–31; Kristin Lohse Belkin, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. German and Netherlandish Masters, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XXVI (1) (London: Harvey Miller, 2009); Jeremy Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. Italian Artists, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XXVI (2.1–3), 3 volumes (London: Harvey Miller, 2011).- On the practice of women particularly, see: Kim Sloan, *'A Noble Art.' Amateur artists and drawing masters c. 1600–1800*, exhibition cat. (London: British Museum, 2000). In the sketchbook another copy after a sixteenth-century, probably Italian, and not yet identified painting is included. The scene depicting Mary and Elizabeth with Jesus and the infant John the Baptist was copied hastily with rather slapdash lines in black ink. See: Sketchbook of Anna Francisca de Bruyns, inv. no. 6507, fol. 17, black ink on paper, 140 × 201 mm, Brussels Royal Library Print Room.

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this book (Fig. 6.3), adding that he had received the etching from his father.[30] The print is actually present, tucked into the manuscript, its Latin caption describing Jacques Francart as painter to the archdukes and De Bruyns' teacher (*Discipula sua*).[31] It was only in 1648, 26 years later, that the portrait was etched by Wenceslaus Hollar for inclusion in the *Académie des Sciences et des Arts*.[32] Francart was so impressed by Anna Francisca's portrait of him that he showed it to the archduchess, who extolled *une fille digne de sa connaissance, et de son estime* (a girl worthy of her renown and others' respect). Then follows the story of the fifteen *Mysteries of the Rosary* paintings that were given to Pope Paul V as a gift. Given Paul V's death in 1621, that date serves as a *terminus ante quem* for the execution of the series. It seems that in a very short time Anna Francisca had found her niche at court. Jacques Ignace writes that in that period she "exercised her brush in the house of Francart in Brussels" (*exerçoit son pinceau en la maison de Francart, à Bruxelles*).[33] The young woman, who was not yet twenty, had been fortunate enough to leave Mons to be trained by her cousin in the capital.

According to her son it was in Francart's house that Isaac Bullart began to court her, charmed as much by the beauty of her art as by the loveliness of her face.[34] He tried to win her by offering her "his services" (*ses services*). Despite his best efforts it was not all smooth sailing: "it was not easy for him to engage her because she tended to be more retiring than social, more inclined to the cloister than to the world."[35] Yet finally, Anna Francisca de Bruyns agreed to be guided by her confessor and parents and consented to marry Isaac Bullart.[36] On 30 May 1628 they were wed in the Church of Saint-Germain in Mons.[37] A year later she followed him to Arras, where on 23 April he had been named the superintendent of the Mount of Piety – an honourable and lucrative

30 "C'est le même que l'on voit en ce livre".

31 MS 819, fol. 414, Lille, Municipal Library: "A l'age de dix-sept ans elle fit en petit sur une lame d'argent le portrait du mesme Francquart, qui m'a esté donné par mon père, et que Hollar a gravé à l'eau forte."

32 See: F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1450–1700*, vol. 7, (Amsterdam, 1952), 11; F. W. H. Hollstein, vol. 9 (Amsterdam, 1953), 71. Etching, 155 × 100 mm.

33 From 1613 onwards Francart lived in Brussels. See: Annemie De Vos, 20–21.

34 Ibid.: "(…) que espris de la beauté de son art, aussy bien que celle de son visage (…)." See also not 18 where the same remark has been made for Virginia da Vezzo.

35 Ibid.: "mais il ne put l'engager facilement, à cause qu'elle avoit plus d'inclination pour la retraite que pour la compagnie, pour le cloistre que pour le monde."

36 See also above, note 3, for the reference to Schurman's advice to educated women not to marry.

37 Ibid.

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FIGURE 6.9
Wenzel Cobergher, Mount of Piety of Arras, 1624

appointment, Jacques Ignace assures us. Two weeks earlier, in Mons, Anna Francisca de Bruyns had given birth to a son, whom they named Wenceslas. There was nothing random about this choice of name, for it was thanks to Wenceslas Cobergher that Isaac Bullart had been given the job in Arras, and he was also the architect of the *Mons Pietatis*, the splendid new house in which they were to live. The child, his namesake, died in infancy.[38] According to Jacques Ignace's account, however, the couple would ultimately have twelve children together.[39]

5 A Wife as a Virgin

Jacques Ignace reflects on the changes in Anna Francisca's life: "After her marriage it became much more difficult for her to find time to practice her art. Although she lamented it, taking care of her large family frequently forced her to put down her paintbrush." In spite of these responsibilities, she still managed to draw and paint after her marriage. Jacques Ignace mentions twelve portraits of "virgins … that she painted from life after the most beautiful faces in the city of Arras." One of them was a self-portrait as a St. Susanna, in which she followed a long tradition of women artists painting self-portraits with the

38 Mieke Ackx (note 1), 18. He was baptized in the Curch of St. Germain on 7 April 1629.
39 MS 819, fol. 415, Lille, Municipal Library.

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help of a mirror.[40] Jacques Ignace's admiration is heartfelt. His mother cleverly organized her various responsibilities so as to leave herself time for painting.

Enlisting local models on the basis of their beauty, as De Bruyns apparently did, recalls an anecdote from Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*. The story tells of how the ancient Greek painter Zeuxis set about portraying Helen of Troy. In order to make her as stunning as possible, he chose the five most beautiful women in Agrigentum and selected the best feature from each of them to arrive at a portrait of the ideal woman.[41] It is intriguing that Anna Francisca chose to portray herself as St. Susanna, an early-Christian martyr who refused to marry Emperor Maxentius because she wished to remain a virgin. Was this a reference to her own initial desire not to marry?[42]

Nor did Anna Francisca's cleverness end there. The idea she devised for the cycle of virgins was also exceptional. To produce the virgins' likenesses, she arranged for some of the townswomen of Arras to sit for her. She included herself among the twelve. There is a whole tradition of women painting self-portraits with the help of a mirror. Yet to paint oneself without a mirror requires additional skill, not to mention great familiarity with one's own face.[43] Unfortunately, these twelve paintings do not seem to have survived.

It is hard to imagine what these *portraits historiés* of twelve virgins would have looked like, but an engraved self-portrait provides an indication. Its inscription states that Anna Francisca painted the (now untraced) prototype in

40 MS 819, fol. 414–415, Lille, Municipal Library: "Dans ce changement de condition il luy fut difficile de conserver tout le temps qui luy estoit necessaire pour l'exercice de son Art. Les soins qu'une femme est obligée de prendre de sa famille luy osterent souvent le pinceau de la main, quoy qu'à son regret'; 'qu'elle prit du naturel sur les plus beaux visages de la ville d'Arras; parmy lesquels elle fit le sein propre hors d'un miroir, representant saincte Susanne." On women artists painting their self-portrait, see: Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture. The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1998), 187–222; Frances Borzello. *A World of Our Own. Women as Artists* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 166–193.

41 See: Pliny, *Natural History*, Chapter 36: "And yet, so scrupulously careful was [Zeuxis], that on one occasion, when he was about to execute a painting for the people of Agrigentum, to be consecrated in the Temple of the Lacinian Juno there, he had the young maidens of the place stripped for examination, and selected five of them, in order to adopt in his picture the most commendable points in the form of each."

42 As to Anna Francisca's twelve paintings it is unlikely that any have survived.

43 On women artists painting their self-portrait, see: Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture. The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist*, New Haven-London, 1998, pp. 187–222; Frances Borzello. *A World of Our Own. Women as Artists*, London, 2000, pp. 166–193.

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ANNO M. DC. XXIX. ✣ ANNA FRANCISCA DE BRVYNS ÆTATIS XXIIII.
Clarissima et eximia pingendi Arte Illustrissima Domina, D:
ANNA FRANCISCA DE BRVYNS, Nobilissimi ac Gene:
rossissimi Domini D: ISAACI BVLLART negij Ordinis Equitis
Regij Vedastinorum Monasterij apud Atrebates Prætoris primarij,
Supremi Montium Pietatis in Flandria et Artesia Præfecti etc: Conjux,
De sua Effigie a se depicta.

FIGURE 6.10
Frederik Bouttats after Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Self-Portrait*, engraving after the prototype of 1629, 1648, MS. 819, f. 633, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lille

1629 when she was twenty-four years old (*De sua Effigie a se depicta*).[44] The engraving was executed only in 1648, by two different engravers, Wenceslaus Hollar (Fig. 6.2) and Frederik Bouttats (Fig. 6.10). In the engraving, Anna Francisca de Bruyns looks out from the image, an indication that she used a mirror for this early self-portrait. Since the portrait is perfectly in keeping with the other portraits in the *Académie des Sciences et des Arts*, we can assume that this picture of Anna was also meant to be included in that compendium, and the two versions of the print have indeed been added to the Lille manuscript, signed in full and dated.[45] At a later point, however, Jacques Ignace seems to have changed his mind about including his mother's portrait in the *Académie* and the engraving was never published.

44 As the portrait of Jacques Francart engraved by De Bruyns in silver, her self-portrait was also engraved by Wenceslaus Hollar (See note 24). To emphasize the fact that they – as female artists – painted the portrait themselves, they added the statement '*se ipsam*' or 'a *se depicta*', as is the case in De Bruyns' portrait. This pictorial tradition goes back to the sixteenth century, as was elucidated by Günther Schweikhardt, Boccaccio's De claris mulieribus und die Selbstdarstellungen von Malerinnen im 16. Jahrhundert', in *Der Künstler Über sich in seinem Werk. Internationales Symposium der Bibliotheca Hertziana Rom* 1989, ed. Matthias Winner (Weinheim: VCH, Acta Humaniora, 1992) 113–136. See also: Joanna Woods-Marsden, 201–205. According to his testimony, Jacques Ignace disposed of the little portrait used as the prototype of the engraving. (See note 46).

45 See: F. W. H. Hollstein, vol. 4, 1951, 27; Lille, Municipal Library, MS 819 (vol. 3), f. 425; MS 819 (vol. 3), f. 633.

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FIGURE 6.11 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Richly Dressed Woman* (possibly a self-portrait), inscribed on the back: 'A.F. de Bruyns 1633', listed in Luzern by Galerie Fischer, 11–14 May 1993, lot 2425, present location unknown

There may be a second reference to Anna Francisca in a life-sized portrait of a richly dressed young woman. Given the sitter's resemblance to her depiction in the engraving this may likewise be a self-portrait (Fig. 6.2). On the back of the canvas (66 × 54 cm) is an inscription, *Anna Francisca de Bruyns 1633*. The

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picture is high in quality though little is known about its origin. In 1964 it was in the possession of a Parisian art dealer; it was auctioned in 1991 and again in 1993 at Galerie Fischer in Lucerne.[46] This painting is just one piece of evidence that Anna Francisca continued to work as an artist after her marriage. Following his account of *les Vierges d'Arras*, Jacques Ignace notes that by portraying the majority of her twelve children, she gave them a second life, one far more enduring than their first (*à la plus part desquels elle a donné une seconde vie par le secret de son Art, certes beaucoup plus durable que la première*).[47]

Jacques Ignace gives some examples of Anna Francisca's *portraits histories* of her children in his next paragraph. Here, he suddenly jumps to his mother's final days. Towards the end of her life, he tells us, she suffered *grandes afflictions de corps et d'esprit* (terrible afflictions of body and mind). Jacques Ignace lays the blame for this on the intrigues and financial problems that plagued her husband in his position as *Grand Bailli* (Great bailiff) of the Abbey of Saint-Vaast at Arras.[48] Then, just when we think the story is over, he adds an entire page listing his mother's major works as an addendum to the more biographically focused narrative, though he does not date any of them. There he mentions a *Nativity* in her hometown of Morialmé, mentioning that it had been completely ruined by an ignorant restorer,[49] and an *Assumption of the Virgin* in the chapel of Notre-Dame du Bon Vouloir in Havré, a pilgrimage site near Mons.[50] This last painting has survived and is hugely impressive; a sizeable canvas, it adorns the chapel's high altar. The chapel was built between 1625 and 1632 for the De Croy family, and the high altar was donated by the Archduchess Isabella in 1631.[51]

46 Luzern, Galerie Fisher, 5–8 November 1991, lot nr. 2360: 'Anna Francisca de Bruyns, Brustbild einer jungen Frau mit perlengeschmücktem Haar, Rückseitig signiert und datiert 1633, Oel auf Lwd, 66,5 × 54 cm'; Luzern, Galerie Fisher, 11–14 Mai 1993, lot nr. 2425 (with the same identification).

47 MS 819, fol. 415, Lille, Municipal Library.

48 See note (17) on his financial problems and lawsuits at the end of his life.

49 MS 819, fol. 415, Lille, Municipal Library: "Outre les ouvrages dont j'ay parlé elle a peint une Nativité, qui est dans une église du village de Morialmé: mais fort gastée presentement par l'ignorance d'un Peintre vulgaire qui a voulu retouchée quelques endroits que l'humidité avoit[…]".

50 Ibid.: "Elle a peint encore une Assomption que l'on voit dans l'église de Havré pres de Mons (…)." Also in the annotations in the Brussels' sketchbook is added: "Une Assomption de la Vierge qui est dans l'Eglise de Haurech près de Mons." See: Sketchbook of Anna Francisca de Bruyns, inv. no. 6507, fol. 37, Brussels Royal Library Print Room.

51 Havré, Notre-Dame du Bon Vouloir, high altar, canvas, 275 × 200 cm. For the history of the chapel, see: Pierre Vanderlinden, *La Chapelle Notre-Dame du Bon Vouloir à Havré* (Mons, 1982).

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FIGURE 6.12
Chapel of Notre dame du Bon Vouloir, Havré, interior view

6 Children as Models

The archduchess undoubtedly remembered the young woman Francart had introduced to her, and she must have asked Anna Francisca to undertake the commission. The altarpiece was presumably painted shortly after the chapel was completed, which puts the date around 1631–1632. By then, Anna had been married for three or four years. According to her son she also painted the Virgin Mary with Christ and St. John as well as a picture of Mary Magdalene. Here, Jacques Ignace noted in the margin: *la Vierge represent sa soeur Antoinette, le Jesus son premier enfant Venceslas*" (the [likeness of the] Virgin was based on her sister Antoinette and that of Jesus on first child Wenceslas). Isaac Bullart presented the painting of the Magdalene to the Capuchin convent in Douai when his daughter Cécile became a nun there. Jacques Ignace could not resist mentioning some of the characteristics that made it typical of his mother's work: *piece fort estimée pour l'action et la carnation, qui est la partie dans laquelle ma mere excelloit* ([a] painting that was highly valued for the movements and complexion [of the figures], which has always been something at which my mother excelled).[52] That he took good care of his mother's belongings is also evident from the next part of his manuscript, where he tells us that he kept a small self-portrait of his mother (along with a picture of his father) in a silver box, mentioning that it was this little portrait that was used as a model for the portrait engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar discussed earlier. From his summary description it is hard to be certain about the nature of the object, which may either have been a drawing or a miniature painted in oil.[53]

52 MS 819, fol. 415, Lille, Municipal Library: "Elle a peint encore (…) une Vierge tenant le petit Jesus qui jouë avec Saint Jean. Une Magdelaine dans la penitence; que mon père a donnée aux Capucines Penitentes de Douai, en faveur de l'entrée de ma sœur Cécile dans leur cloistre, et quelles ont placer dans le cœur de l'église."

53 Ibid.: "Elle a fait aussi son propre portrait en petit, que je conserve dans une boëte d'argent avec celuy de mon père, et qui a servy d'original à celuy que l'on voit avec cet éloge."

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He also lists several drawings, done in chalk or pen, such as a *Descent from the Cross*, as well as chiaroscuro drawings on blue paper that he describes as *assez curieux*. The pen drawing of the Descent from the Cross is, according to his annotation in the margin, *dans le livre des dessins de Rome qui est dans mon cabinet* (in the book of drawings from Rome that are in my cabinet). He notes that he kept his mother's other drawings safe in his cabinet as well.[54]

Finally, he refers to *le dernier ouvrage de son pinceau* (the last work of her brush), a highly original and personal painting done in the mid-1650s when Anna Francisca once again produced a *portrait historié*, for which four of her children served as models: [*L'ouvrage*] *represente quatre de ses enfants sous les figures de la Vierge, du petit Jesus, de Saint Jean Baptiste, et de Sainte Dorothée* (the work depicts four of the children portraying the Virgin Mary, the infant Jesus, St. John the Baptist and St. Dorothy). Jacques Ignace mentions that she was too ill to finish it. Isaac Bullart had it completed by a skilled painter from Arras, and in 1663 he donated it to the Augustinian convent there, where another of the couple's daughters, Isabelle Sabine, was a nun.[55] Jacques Ignace could not only easily identify his own brother and sisters but was also convinced that this information was important enough to make it known to later generations. At his father's request or on Jacques Ignace's own initiative, the poet Guillaume de la Rivière[56] produced a Latin caption for the painting that clearly identifies exactly who is shown. On the inscription in gold letters beneath the painting, one could read that the painting was by Anna Francisca de Bruyns, an outstanding painter, wife of Isaac Bullart who installed the painting by his most beloved wife, who had portrayed her own children in

54 Ibid.: "Elle a fait encore divers desseings d'ombre et de blanc sur du papier bleu, que sont assez curieux'(…); ' L'Assomption est icy page 419 La descente de la croix est dans le livre des dessins de Rome qui est dans mon cabinet(…)." The meaning of this *'livre de dessins de Rome'* is not clear. Based on her son's biography, there is no evidence that De Bruyns stayed in Rome. It is not to be excluded that she kept an album in which she preserved her drawings after 'Romans' – to be red as 'antique' prototypes, either engraved or sculptured.

55 Ibid.: "Comme elle le laissa imparfait à cause de ses infirmitez, mon père le fit achevée après sa mort par un peintre d'Arras assez entendu, et le donna au Religieuses Augustines de la mesme ville, en consideration de sa fille Isabelle, Religieuse dans leur Monastère. (…)."

56 Ibid.: "(…) avec cette Inscription composée par Guillaume de la Rivière, qui est en dessous en lettres d'or." Guillaume de la Rivière was the son of Guillaume de la Rivière Senior (1548–after 1627) who was a nephew of Jeanne de la Rivière, wife of Christopher Plantin. The last settled in Arras from 1591 onwards as a printer and editor. His two sons, Guillaume and Jean-Baptiste, succeeded him. See: http://data.bnf.fr/12239252/guillaume_de_la_riviere/ De la Rivière Junior is the author of a manuscript in which literary works and variant notes on contemporaries have been preserved. Also a detailed biography of Anna Maria van Schurman is included. See: MS Guillaume de la Rivière, t. I, cote 690, fol. 573, 575, t. IV, cote 694, fol. 123–130, Lille, Municipal Library; Katlijne Van der Stighelen, *Anna Maria van Schurman*, 10–12.

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the work: *Carissima, atque eximia pingendi Arte, pergelustris Domina*. Sister Isabelle Sabine is depicted as the Virgin Mary, little Cécile plays the role of Jesus, Jacques Ignace, the author of her biography, appears as St. John, and their sister, Maria-Magdalena, as St. Dorothy. All were brought to life by their mother's brush. That she depicted her offspring in such a way is a sign of her *Pietatis et innocentia foemina* (female piety and innocence).[57] For painters to use their own children as models was not so unusual; much more extraordinary is that Anna Francisca explicitly declared it to be the case and appeared so eager to emphasize that aspect of her painting.[58]

7 A Sketch as a Fulfilment

The aforementioned *Sketchbook* that once belonged to Jacques Ignace Bullart in the Print Room of the Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels is only 17 × 26 cm in size. The biographical information it contains is generally consistent with what we find in the Lille manuscript, and the handwriting appears to be the same. The little album contains about fifty drawings by Anna Francisca de Bruyns, which, as far as we can gather, date from different periods. It gives the impression that it was used as a "graphic diary." Besides a whole variety of sketches of heads, hands, draperies, and so forth there are many identifiable compositions in it. Most of them are sketches for religious subjects, and they show that Anna had a very conspicuous liking for scenes showing the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus. St. Anne and St. John also make repeated appearances. There is also a preliminary study for a scene with *St. Cecilia*, and it is perhaps no coincidence that Anna Francisca had a daughter named Cécile. Engravings of portraits she

57 MS 819, fol. 415, Lille, Municipal Library: "(…) suos in hac Tabulâ liberos: nempe D(omi)nam Isabellam Sabinam, huiusque Monasterij Sanctimonialem sub personâ Diva Virginis Maria: Caeciliam sub imagine parvuli Jesu: filium Jacobum Ignatium sub figura S. Joannis, Agnum Jesu Matrique offerentem, et Mariam Magdalenam S. Dorothea flores offerentis(…)."

58 For example, the identification of Rubens's spouses and children in his history paintings has always been a point of discussion although there are some cases in which it is quite evident. On the basis of identified (drawn and painted) portraits of his children they seem to be recognizable as putti or mere children in many paintings. Of course, caution should be taken. See: Hans Vlieghe, *Rubens Portraits of Identified Sitters Painted in Antwerp*, Corpus Rubenianum XIX.2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1987), passim; Also Diego Velasquez and Rembrandt introduced their wives and sons as historical figures into their paintings to give only some contemporary examples. For an excellent general overview, see: Jill Berk Jiminez (ed.), *Dictionary of Artists's Models*, 2nd ed. (London-Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2013).

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FIGURE 6.13 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Assumption of the Virgin*, high altar, Notre-dame du Bon Vouloir, Havré

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FIGURE 6.14 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Mary, the Christ Child and St. John*, sketchbook, Department of Prints and Drawings, 6507/50, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels

produced have also been included in the album. There is a single sketch for a mythological scene depicting Diana, and she twice made preliminary drawings for a painting of the *The Continence of Scipio*.

The album of drawings not only evinces a skillful and dynamic hand, but the prevalence of history paintings is quite striking given that during the

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FIGURE 6.15 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Mary, the Christ Child, and St. Anne Surrounded by Angels*, sketchbook, 6507/19, Department of Prints and Drawings, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, photo: J. Geleyns – Ro scan

seventeenth century it was so unusual for women to concentrate on such subjects.[59] The fluency in rendering apparent in Anna Francisca's drawings

59 For a general introduction into the debate on the relation between social context and themes preferred by women-artists, see: Linda Nochlin, "Why have there been no great women artists? [1971]," in *Women artists. The Linda Nochlin reader*, ed. Maura Reilly (London: Thames & Hudson, 2015) 42–68; In Italy a few women painters produced monumental history scenes from the late sixteenth century onwards. To name a few: Sofonisba Anguissola (c. 1535–1625), Plautilla Nelli (1524(?)–1588), Lavinia Fontani (1552–1614), Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1654(?)) and Fede Galizia (c. 1574–c. 1630). See: Germaine Greer, *The obstacle race: The fortunes of women painters and their work* (New York: Tauris Parke, 1979); *Italian Women Artists from Renaissance to Baroque*, exhibition cat. (Washington: National Museum of Women in the Arts, 2007), 31–39, cat. Nrs. 103, 106, 135, 173, 198, 241; Frances Borzello, *A World of Our Own. Women as Artists*, London, 2000, 16–48. Also in the Netherlands it seemed to have been exceptional. See: Els Kloek, Catherine

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FIGURE 6.16 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Mary, the Christ Child and St. John*, sketchbook, Department of Prints and Drawings, 6507/13, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, photo: J. Geleyns – Ro scan

Peters Sengers and Esther Tobé (eds.), *Vrouwen en kunst in de Republiek. Een overzicht* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 9–20. To give one example: Catharina van Hemessen painted *small* religious scenes of far lesser quality than her portraits. See: Karolien De Clippel, *Catharina van Hemessen (1528–na1567). Een monografische studie over een uytnemende wel geschickte vrouwe in de conste der schilderyen'* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 2004), cat. nrs. 24–27; Marguerite Droz-Emmert, *Catharina van Hemessen. Malerin der Renaissance* (Basel: Schwabe, 2004).

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FIGURE 6.17 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *St. Cecilia*, sketchbook, Department of Prints and Drawings, 6507/5, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels

could only have been the result of diligent practice and knowledge of contemporary painting.[60] As we saw earlier, even before she was twelve she had access to a sixteenth-century northern Netherlandish print; later on she must also have had opportunities to study and perhaps even collect paintings and prints.

60 The only woman who kept several albums that included drawings after prints and drawing books (datable c. 1720), including male nudes, is Catharina Backer (1689–1766), a daughter of elitarian parents and married to Allard de la Court, one of the main collectors in eighteenth-century Amsterdam. See: C. W. Fock, "De stillevens van Catharina Backer of de verdrijving van de melancholie," *Jaarboekje voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde van Leiden en omstreken*, 72 (1980): 73–86; G. Sluiter, "Catharina Backer (1689–1766). Het 'bewogen leven' van een rijke dilettante," in *Vrouwen en kunst in de Republiek: een overzicht*, eds. E. Kloek, C. Peters-Sengers, E. Tobé (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 47–54.

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FIGURE 6.18 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Diana*, sketchbook, Department of Prints and Drawings, 6507/9, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, photo: J. Geleyns – Ro scan

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FIGURE 6.19 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Magnanimity of Scipio*, sketchbook, Department of Prints and Drawings, 6507/10, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, photo: J. Geleyns – Ro scan

For example, she could hardly have produced her *Assumption of the Virgin* of around 1631 without familiarity with prints after Rubens's work of this subject, painted only a few years earlier. In addition, one wonders whether she traveled within or outside the Low Countries.[61] The variety of subject matter she

61 From the biography of many middle class and upper middle class we learn that women were able to travel. There is archival evidence that merchant women uncomplicatedly

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addressed indicates that Anna Francisca de Bruyns must have had proper training. No doubt the proximity of her kinsmen Jacques Francart and Wenceslas Cobergher would have encouraged her to educate herself both intellectually and artistically. Copying after loose-leaf prints or drawing books was a standard element of early modern artistic education and enabled young artists to study the most difficult figures, animals and objects.[62] If, as a young woman of only sixteen or seventeen, she went to Brussels for further training by Francart, she presumably lived in the capital for seven or eight years. Cobergher would certainly have shown her the Basilica of Our Lady in Scherpenheuvel[63] (consecrated in 1627), a bastion of Baroque engineering, in which hung (and still hang) a series of paintings by Theodoor van Loon (c. 1580–1649).[64]

It is thanks to the care Jacques Ignace Bullart took in completing Anna Francisca de Bruyns' biography and describing her work that we have so much information about her today. His notes in the Brussels sketchbook are what

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travelled from one city to another within the boundaries of The Netherlands. See: Koenraad Brosens, Klara Alen, Astrid Slegten, Fred Truyen, "MapTap and Cornelia Slow Digital Art History and Formal Art Historical Social Network Research," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 79 (2016), 315–330 (esp. 321–325 on women in tapestry world). Single merchant women even travelled to America hoping for new trading possibilities. See: Susan Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in seventeenth-Century America* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 66, 75–79, 101. Also educated women had chances to travel. For example Anna Roemer Visscher travelled from the Northern Netherlands to Brussels; Anna Maria van Schurman travelled from Utrecht to Cologne, Middelburg and Amsterdam and later joined the community of the Labadists in Altona.

62 See: Victoria Sancho Lobis, "Printed Drawing Books an the Dissemination of Ideal Male Anatomy in Northern Europe," in *The Nude and the Norm in the Early Modern Low Countries*, eds., Karolien De Clippel, Katharina Van Cauteren & Katlijne Van der Stighelen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 51–62; Lara Yeager-Crasselt, "Knowledge and practice pictured in the artist's studio. The 'art lover' in the seventeenth-century Netherlands," *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 32 (2016), 195–201.

63 On Scherpenheuvel, see: Luc Duerloo and Marc Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel. Het Jeruzalem der Lage Landen* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2002). Luc Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety: Archduke Albert (1598–1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars* (London: Ashgate, 2012); Luc Duerloo and Werner Thomas, *Albert & Isabella. The Promise of a Golden Age. Essays* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); Raingard Esser, *The Politics of Memory. The Writing of Partition in the Seventeenth-Century Low Countries, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012); Magdalena Sánchez, "Sword and Wimple: Isabel Clara Eugenia and Power," in *The Rule of Women in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Anne J. Cruz and Mihoko Suzuki (Urbana-Chicago: University of Illinois , 2009), 64–78.

64 Irene Baldriga, Brigitte De Patoul, and Marie-Françoise Dispa, *Theodoor van Loon: "pictor ingenius" en tijdgenoot van Rubens*, Cahiers van de Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, 10 (Gent: Snoeck, 2011).

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FIGURE 6.20
Paulus Pontius after Peter Paul Rubens, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, 1624, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

allow us to attribute the drawings to her. Jacques Ignace was an ideal witness, but we must also remember that he was relying on his memory. His annotations were almost certainly made after his father's death in 1672, when he began his editorial work on the *Académie*. By that time his mother had been dead for sixteen years. What did he remember himself and what additional sources did he use? Perhaps he consulted his brother and sisters, although by 1657 only six of the twelve children were still alive. Had their mother spoken to them about her artistic career? Jacques Ignace stressed that she had not wanted to marry, and one senses his doubt that she was satisfied with the limited time she was able to spend with a paintbrush in hand.

Her series of *Twelve Virgins* in Arras gives us a glimpse of her originality and ambition. As discussed above, she claimed a place for herself, disguised as St. Susanna, a move that was at once self-effacing and assertive. The engraving from 1629 has become her best-known self-portrait, even though she had to wait until 1648 before it spread via the prints that were made after it. Did she expect that her engraved portrait would figure in the gallery of brilliant scientists and artists in her husband's *Académie des Sciences et des Arts*? If so, who vetoed that idea? Was it Jacques Ignace himself or did Isaac make the decision after his wife's death? And how might the print relate to another "disguised"

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painted self-portrait, dated 1633, in which a beautiful woman appears in sumptuous clothing with pearls in her hair (Fig. 6.11)? The Brussels sketchbook also contains some loosely drawn self-portraits that closely resemble that painting.

One might begin to think that Anna Francisca de Bruyns maintained a consistent interest in her own image. Did she seek to balance her own "self-fashioning" or focus on her own personality with scenes in which her children had the starring roles? Or did she conceive of both as somehow elements of herself? The Brussels sketchbook shows that she put particular energy into the representation of the Virgin Mary, Elizabeth and their children. It is possible that she saw these efforts as an externalization of her own maternal role and duties or that in representing her children, she sought to renounce ambition and convince herself of her own devotion and virtuousness.

Like so many Netherlandish women painters, De Bruyns did not sign her works. In spite of her sound training, however, she should perhaps be included among the *dilettanti* – those who made art for their own pleasure rather than as a means of gainful employment – because we do not know if she was ever paid for any of her paintings.[65] It is unclear if she painted the Archduchess Isabella's *Assumption of the Virgin* simply for the honor or whether she was monetarily rewarded. As in the case of the fifteen small paintings that the archduchess sent to the pope, prestige was probably a greater motivation than money.[66] After her marriage she sought to maintain her skills and managed to take up her brushes from time to time. The aforementioned painting from the mid-1650s shows that in this respect she succeeded almost until her death.

It is frustratingly difficult to reconstruct the lives of early modern women on the basis of archival records and literary sources. Baptism registers offer

65 See on the position of amateur artists: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, "Amateur Art as a social skill," 66–80; Wendy Wiertz, "The rebirth of the amateur artist: The effect of past opinions on the amateur artist in current research," in *Art and its responses to changes in society*, in *Conference proceedings: Decline-Metamorphosis-Rebirth, International conference for PhD Students, Slovenië, Ljubljana, 18–20 September 2014*, Eds. Ines Unetič, Martin Germ, Martina Malešič (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016), 63–74.

66 Prestige but also friendship relationships may have played an important role when one woman to another or men and women mutually exchanged presents such as books, engravings, miniatures in oil or pencil, cuttings, etcetera. See: L. Kooijmans, *Vriendschap en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en de achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1997); Sophie Reinders, *De mug en de kaars. Vriendenboekjes van adellijke vrouwen 1575–1640* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2017), 87–126. Constantijn Huygens Sr. and Anna Maria van Schurman freely offered presents to each other in order to tighten social connections and enhance intellectual pleasure. See: Katlijne Van der Stighelen and Jeanine De Landtsheer, "Een suer-soete Maeghd voor Constantijn Huygens: Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)," *De Zeventiende Eeuw: Cultuur in de Nederlanden in Interdisciplinair Perspectief, 25* (2009): 149–202.

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basic information on family matters such as birth, marriage, death and the family's parish. Occasionally residence addresses are noted, and information on godfathers and godmothers sometimes makes it possible to map a woman's social network. When women in general and artists in particular had no "official" employment, they left historians few traces to follow. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that they were fully engaged in business activities. In such cases, personal documents, including letters and accounts, can attest to their activities.[67] *Alba Amicora* also serve as unique exponents of private culture triggered by women.[68] Anna Francisca and her works only come to life thanks to the notes and *preciosa* her son carefully looked after, noted down and cherished. In 1718 Arnold Houbraken published *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, a compendium in which he included a handful of women artists. Like Bullart, he also referred to Anna Francisca de Bruyns within the biography of Jacques Francart: "Anna Françoise de Bruns was a relative of his and he introduced her into the art of painting so that she exceeded all other women painters."[69] At that time she was apparently still viewed as a painter of some note, but the reader was supposed to take his word for it.[70]

67 See: Koenraad Brosens a.o., "MapTap," 321–325 on women acting and travelling independently in tapestry business. Another example of an extremely active and self-employed woman is the wife of Peter Snayers, famous painter of battle scenes, living in Brussels. See: Leen Kelchtermans, "Portret van een zeventiende-eeuwse schildersvrouw: Anna Schut, huisvrouw en weduwe van Peter Snayers," in *Oud-Holland*, 126 (2013), 178–197. Thanks to a housekeeping booklet it became possible to reconstruct her private life and social network.

68 Recent research elucidates the richness and variety of this irreplaceable medium in aristocratic society. The predictable and simple execution indicates that the ladies involved didn't intend to make a work of art but tried to enhance their social identity. See: Sophie Reinders, *De mug en de kaars*.

69 Arnold Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstshilders en Schilderessen*, 1, 2nd ed. (The Hague, 1753), 162–163: *"Anna Françoise de Bruns, die hem in maagschap bestond, heeft hy de Schilderkonst geleerd; zoo dat zy alle Schilderessen van dien tyd overtrof."* Apparently Houbraken did not understand that it was De Bruyns who painted the cycle of the Mysteries of the Rosary because he noted that it was 'Francart' himself who had painted the 'Misterien' for the Archduchess and had them sent to the pope. Florent Le Comte, *Het Konst-Cabinet der Bouw-Schilder, Beeldhouw- en Graveerkunde*, 2 (Utrecht, 1744), 38, refers to De Bruyns adding that it was she who painted the 'Geheimenisse van de Roosekrans' for the archduchess.

70 For a wider discussion on the historiographical tradition, see: Esther Tobé, "Parels en penseelprinsessen. Kunstenaressen in drie lexica (1550–1800)," in *'Elck zijn waerom'. Vrouwelijke kunstenaars in België en Nederland 1500–1950*, exhibition cat. Eds. Katlijne Van der Stighelen & Mirjam Westen (Antwerp: Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Arnhem, Gent: Museum voor Moderne Kunst, 1999), 59–67.

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FIGURE 6.21 Anna Francisca de Bruyns, *Self-Portrait* (?), sketchbook, Department of Prints and Drawings, 6507/40v°, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels

Just one additional contemporary sketchbook by a Netherlandish woman has been preserved, which can provide further insight into the practices of women artists at the time. Zwolle-based Geesken ter Borch, or Gesina (1631–1690), was the daughter of the painter Gerard ter Borch, and sister of Gerard Jr., Harmen and Moses, all three painters as well. She left numerous examples of calligraphy, drawings and watercolors executed in the 1660s and 1670s. She was particularly talented at drawing and coloring small scenes of everyday life.[71]

71 She left more than hundred drawings or gouaches with everyday life scenery and just a couple of historical themes such as a Joseph and the wife of Potiphar, a Nativity, S. Cecilia and The Holy Virgin. The last was drawn after a composition by Anthony van Dyck. See: Alison McNeil Kettering, *Drawings from the Ter Borch Studio Estate*, II (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1988), 316–760.

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FIGURE 6.22 Michaelina Wautier, *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*, c. 1649, Grand Séminaire, Namur

8 De Bruyns as a Role Model?

Although she would not have known it, De Bruyns almost certainly became a role model for another woman artist, Michaelina Wautier (1614–1689). Born in Mons, Wautier was fourteen when Anna Francisca married Isaac Bullart in the same city in 1628. Anna Francisca's eldest son Wenceslas was christened in the Church of Saint-Germain in Mons, the same parish church in which Michaelina's older brothers were baptized. The De Bruyn and Wautier families both belonged to the city's upper class. From the *Rue d'Havré*, in which Michaelina Wautier lived between 1614 and around 1640, it was only about five km to the Chapel of Notre-Dame du Bon Vouloir, where Anna Francisca's painting adorned the high altar (Fig. 6.13). It is therefore likely that Wautier, the only female painter of large-scale historical scenes in the seventeenth-century Low Countries, knew the painting and knew it to have been made by a woman.

Wautier had no children and no one to preserve her memory. All that remains are her signed paintings, which are even more impressive and ambitious than Anna Francisca's. Whether they were personally acquainted or not, Anna Francisca must have functioned as a role model for Michaelina, who was exactly ten years her junior. Some twenty years later Michaelina Wautier

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FIGURE 6.23 Michaelina Wautier, *Triumph of Bacchus*, c. 1655, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

painted a monumental *Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine* 1655[72] and her daring in employing complex iconography in her drawings and paintings put her on the path to painting a monumental Bacchus procession, which entered the collection of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm around 1655.[73] Although this is not the place to discuss Michaelina Wautier further, it is exhilarating to see how uncovering of the life of one woman contributes to the reconstruction of the hidden history of another.[74]

72 P. Y. Kairis, "Foissonnement et diversité: les peintres du XVII^{e} Siècle," in *Un double regard sur 2000 ans d'art wallon* (Tournai, Belgique: Renaissance du Livre; Brussels: Crédit Communal, 2000).

73 See: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, "Prima inter pares. Over de voorkeur van aartshertog Leopold-Wilhelm voor Michaelina Woutiers" in *Sponsors of the Past. Flemish Art and Patronage 1550–1700*, Eds. Hans Vlieghe & Katlijne Van der Stighelen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 91–116; Jahel Sanzsalazar, "Michaelina Wautier y la boda de su hermano: Historia de un retrato identificado," in *Tendencias del Mercado de Arte*, 69 (2014), 90–94.

74 In the Summer of 2018 a first exhibition on the paintings by Michaelina Wautier was organized by the Rubenshuis in the MAS-museum in Antwerp. See: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, *Michaelina Wautier 1604–1689. Glorifying a Forgotten Talent*. Antwerp: Rubenshuis, 2018.

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CHAPTER 7

Foregrounding the Background: Images of Dutch and Flemish Household Servants

Diane Wolfthal

To a great extent, art historians who study early modern women have focused on what Patricia Skinner has termed "the great and the good": aristocratic women, wives of wealthy merchants, and female artists, saints, and nuns.[1] Not only do publications privilege these groups, but so do titles of paintings that were invented in the modern era. Such titles as *Lady at her Toilette, Young Woman with a Pearl Necklace*, or *Man Visiting a Woman Washing her Hands* disregard the presence of the working-class women in the compositions (Figs. 7.1–7.2).[2]

This essay instead explores a group that art historians have largely ignored: ordinary female household servants. Although several historians have focused on seventeenth-century Dutch servants, few art historians have discussed them, and, other than Bert Watteeuw's recent essay on Rubens' domestic staff, household workers from the Southern Netherlands or from earlier centuries have been largely overlooked.[3] The reasons for this are numerous. Few documents

1 Patricia Skinner's phrase derives from her paper, "The medieval female life cycle as an organizing strategy," presented at "Gender and Medieval Studies Annual Conference: Gender, Time and Memory," Swansea University, 6 January 2011–8 January 2011. I would like to thank Amanda Pipkin and Sarah Moran for inviting me to speak at the conference *Concerning Early Modern Women of the Low Countries* and for their helpful bibliographical suggestions and thoughtful comments and on earlier drafts of this essay.

2 See, among others, Otto Nauman, "Frans van Mieris's Personal Style," in *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681*, ed. Quentin Buvelot (The Hague: Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, 2006), 37, fig. 13; Peter van der Ploeg, "A Woman Before a Mirror," in *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681*, ed. Quentin Buvelot (The Hague: Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, 2006), 159, fig. 31b; Peter C. Sutton, Lisa Vergara, and Ann Jensen Adams, *Love Letters: Dutch Genre Paintings in the Age of Vermeer* (London: Frances Lincon, 2003), 164–65, figs. 1–2.

3 Historical studies include Marybeth Carlson, "Domestic Service in a Changing City Economy: Rotterdam, 1680–1780," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1993; Carlson, "A Trojan Horse of Worldliness? Maidservants in the Burgher Household in Rotterdam at the End of the Seventeenth Century," in *Women of the Golden Age: An International Debate on Women in Seventeenth-Century Holland, England, and Italy*, ed. Els Kloek, Nicole Teeuwen, and Marijke Huisman (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994). 87–101; Carlson, "'There is no Service Here but my Service!': Municipal Attempts to Regulate Domestic Servant Behavior in Early Modern Holland." in *Power and the City in the Netherlandic World*, ed. Wayne te Brake and

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FIGURE 7.1 Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Young Women with a Pearl Necklace*, c. 1664, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie

Wim Klooster (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 225–234; Rudolf Dekker, "Maid Servants in the Dutch Republic: Sources and Comparative Perspectives. A Response to Marybeth Carlson," in *Women of the Golden Age*, 97–101; and Derek Phillips, *Well-Being in Amsterdam's Golden Age* (Amsterdam: Pallas Publications, 2008), 79–93, which is largely dependent on Carlson. See Bert Watteeuw, "Household Names? Domestic Staff in Rubens's Home," in *Rubens in Private: The Master Portrays his Family*, ed. Ben van Beneden (London: Thames & Hudson, 2015), 55–75. In this volume, see also Sarah Joan Moran, "Resurrecting the 'Spiritual Daughters':

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FIGURE 7.2 Gabriel Metsu, *A Man Visiting a Woman Washing her Hands*, c. 1664–62, private collection

link art and servants. Domestic workers rarely produced art and the art that they owned cannot be identified today.[4] Furthermore, when such women are

The Houtappel Chapel and Women's Patronage of Jesuit Building Programs in the Spanish Netherlands," 276–278.

4 For art owned by servants, see Watteeuw, "Household names," 68, and below for a painting of Geertje Dircx.

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FIGURE 7.3 Pieter de Hooch, *Interior with Women beside a Linen Cupboard*, 1663, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

depicted, they can seldom be linked with certainty to either a name or occupation.[5] It is often difficult, for example, to distinguish housewives from hired help. The figures in the middle ground of Rogier van der Weyden's paintings who wash laundry or carry parcels could be housewives or servants.[6] Similarly, in Pieter de Hooch's painting of two women storing linen in a cupboard, Wayne Franits identifies the figure on the right as the mistress and her companion as the maid, whereas John Loughman argues the reverse (Fig. 7.3).[7] Since employ-

5 Diane Wolfthal, "Household Help: Early Modern Portraits of Female Servants," *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 8 (2013): 5–52.

6 See Diane Wolfthal and Cathy Metzger, *Corpus of Early Netherlandish Painting 22. Los Angeles Museums* (Brussels: Royal Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2014), 157, fig. 16, and a figure carrying a parcel in the background of Rogier's *Magdalen Reading*, London, National Gallery.

7 Wayne E. Franits, *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 104. Yet in a painting in the National

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ers often gave their household help their cast-off clothes, costume alone is an unreliable indicator of class.

But art historians have ignored servants for another reason: the artists themselves often marginalize them. In fifteenth-century Netherlandish art, servants are shown off to the side, partially cut off by the frame or other figures, situated in the background, or seen from the back.[8] Sometimes architectural elements overlap them, obliterating their facial features, and thereby depriving them of their individuality, as in illuminations of a servant carrying bath water through an entryway (Fig. 7.4).[9] Sometimes color or size differentiates maid from mistress. In a late thirteenth-century miniature, the taller figure, Judith, wears red and blue, her shorter maid, dull grey (Fig. 7.5).[10] Dutch Golden Age painters adopt similar strategies. In one painting Gabriel Metsu shows the lady of the house in rich colors, shimmering satins, and luminous light, all of which brings our eye to her (Fig. 7.2).[11] Her servant, by contrast, wears plainer, coarser, and darker clothing. In a second painting by Metsu, the servant stands to the side and in the background; in a third she is a shadowy figure, off to the side, cut off by a table, hidden in darkness.[12] In Bartolomeus van der Helst's group portrait, the three servers are not only pushed to the middle ground, off to the side, and even partially out the door, but they also seem paler, almost ghost-like in appearance (Fig. 7.6).

But there is a final reason why art historians so often overlook servants: our discipline is closely tied to the art market and to wealthy donors, and as a

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Gallery, London, dated to the same years, the wealthy Adriana van Heusden wears both an apron and a similar expensive fur-trimmed black jacket. John Loughman, "Between Reality and Artful Fiction: The Representation of the Domestic Interior in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art," in *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior Since the Renaissance*, ed. Jeremy Aynsley and Charlotte Grant (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2006), 73.

8 See, for example, Master of the Ghent Privileges, "Presentation in the Temple," Book of Hours, New York, Morgan Library and Museum, Ms. M. 82, fol. 66r; Limbourg Brothers, "Exaltation of the Cross," Très Riches Heures, Chantilly, Musée Condé, fol. 143r; Master of the Walters 281, "Flight into Egypt," Malet-Lannoy Hours, Walters Art Museum, Ms. 182, fol. 103.

9 See, for example, Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry. The Late Fourteenth Century and the Patronage of the Duke* (London: Phaidon Press, 1967), vol. 2, figs. 322–323.

10 Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig 18, Maquette Bible, Franco-Flemish, ca. 1270. Donated by Philip, Duke of Burgundy, to the Cistercian convent at Marquette.

11 Loughman, "Between Reality and Artful Fiction," 94.

12 For these paintings, see Wayne E. Franits, "Gabriel Metsu and the Art of Luxury," 54, 67 in *Gabriel Metsu*, ed. Adriaan E. Waiboer (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

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FIGURE 7.4 Egerton Workshop, *Birth of the Virgin*, from the *Breviary of John the Fearless and Margaret of Bavaria*, c. 1410–1419, Harley 2897, fol. 385, British Library, London

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FIGURE 7.5 Unknown artist (probably from Lille), *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, from the *Marquette Bible*, c. 1270, Ms. Ludwig 18, v. 3, fol. 241v, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

FIGURE 7.6 Bartholomeus van der Helst, *The Governers of the Kloveniersdoelen*, 1655, Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam

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result has long identified with the elite. For example, Ruth Mellinkoff, in her fine book *Outcasts*, asserted, "While we who live in the era of the common man publicly extol his virtues, privately we admire and covet the attributes of the upper class … [F]ew would not be delighted to have a titled guest at table, no matter how tarnished the title might be."[9] And Donald Kuspit astutely observed, "the irrational exuberance of the contemporary art market is about the breeding of money, not the fertility of art … Only art that makes money finds its way into the textbooks, which sometimes seem like rationalizations of auction results."[13]

Past scholarship on images of servants has focused primarily on Dutch Golden Age genre paintings and prints. In 1988, Simon Schama explored the association between cleanliness and the Dutch nation, seeing the Dutch home as a microcosm of the republic.[14] He also demonstrated how imagery emphasized the mistress's responsibility to control her servants' lust, sloth, gluttony, and greed.[15] In 1993, Wayne Franits examined Dutch genre paintings that show the ideal: a mistress properly supervising her servant so as to insure the smooth functioning of the home.[16] The next year Martha Hollander analyzed six comedic paintings by Nicolaes Maes that explore tensions between maids and mistresses in spatially divided and morally disordered domestic interiors.[17] In 2001, Malgorzata Sarnowiec studied the illustrations in two books, which were printed in Amsterdam in 1682, that portrayed servants as lustful, lazy, gossiping harpies and thieves.[18]

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13 Donald Kuspit, "Art Values or Money Values?" *artnet*, Dec. 22, 2007. http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/kuspit/kuspit3-6-07.asp, Accessed 2/24/17. See also, among many others, Michael Kimmelman, "Art, Money, and Power," *The New York Times*, May 11, 2005 http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/11/arts/design/art-money-and-power.html?_r=0, accessed 4/8/17.

14 Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (Berkeley: University of London Press, 1988), 378–82.

15 Ibid., 393, 457–58.

16 Franits, *Paragons of Virtue*, 100–110.

17 Martha Hollander, "The Divided Household of Nicolaes Maes," *Word and Image* 10.2 (April-June 1994): 138–155.

18 Malgorzata Sarnowiec, "De zeven zonden van het dienstmeisje: Een moralistische en libertijnse versie beschreven en verbeeld," in *'Tweelinge eener dragt': Woord en beeld in de Nederlanden (1500–1750)*, ed. Karel Bostoen, Elmer Kolfin, and Paul J. Smith (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), 199–224. Servants are also discussed in passing in Sutton, Vergara, and Jenson Adams, *Love Letters*. Christine Petra Sellin explored servants through the biblical story of Hagar. See *Fractured Families and Rebel Maidservants: The Biblical Hagar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and Literature* (New York and London: T & T Clark International, 2006).

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This essay, by contrast, will also examine Flemish and earlier works, and will, on occasion, compare them to images produced outside the Netherlands. In addition, I will interrogate a broader range of sources, not only genre paintings and prints, but also artists' biographies, portraits, and doll houses in order to enrich our understanding of female servants in the early modern Low Countries. If artists repeatedly relegated servants to the background, I propose to do the reverse: to foreground these figures.

The term "servant" is a broad category that in early modern times encompassed a wide spectrum from menial maids who cleaned the house to court artists and aristocratic ladies-in-waiting.[19] Servitude was a deeply engrained concept: even lovers served their beloved, and rulers their God.[20] This essay, however, only concerns household workers who performed such tasks as sweeping floors, serving food, scrubbing pots and pans, starching and ironing laundry, and caring for young children. In doing so, I will ask: What was the relationship of artists to their servants? How have art historians discussed household workers? Do portraits of ordinary servants survive? How are hierarchical differences among servants visualized? What does material culture reveal about the lived experience of servants and how they were viewed by their masters? What can be learned by broadening our scope to include art produced outside the Netherlands and over several centuries? And finally, how do images of servants challenge our thinking about race, class, and gender?

1 Artists' Servants

One way to better understand the intersection of art history and servants is to study artists' relationships with their household help. But documents generally offer only a fleeting glimpse of the lives of artists' servants.[21] In this section, however, I will focus on two cases for which numerous documents survive, the painters Rembrandt and Maria van Oosterwijk, who treated their servants in

19 For a thoughtful analysis of the term "domestic work," see Mark Hailwood, "How 'Domestic' was Women's Work?" https://earlymodernwomenswork.wordpress.com/2016/06/09/how-domestic-was-womens-work/.

20 P. J. P. Goldberg, "What Was a Servant," in *Concepts and Patterns of Service*, ed. by Anne Curry (London: Boydell Press, 2000), 2.

21 For example, to settle a dispute between Judith Leyster and the mother of a former pupil, the painter promised that her servant would return his belongings. Other than that incident nothing is known about this servant. See Ellen Broersen, "'Judita Leystar': A Painter of 'Godd, Keen Sense'," in James A. Welu and Peter Biesboer, *Judith Leyster: A Dutch Master and Her World* (Worcester: Worcester Art Museum, 1993), 20. I am grateful to Frima Fox Hofrichter for this reference.

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diametrically opposite ways. After Rembrandt's wife Saskia Uylenburgh died in 1642, he hired a widow, Geertje Dircx, to care for his nine-month old son Titus. Soon Rembrandt and Geertje became sexually involved and lived as husband and wife for several years. We know this not simply from Geertje's testimony, but also from the writings of Arnold Houbraken, who based his knowledge on information from his master Samuel van Hoogstraten, Rembrandt's pupil in the 1640s. Houbraken related, "Rembrandt had as Wife a little farm woman from Raarep, or Ransdorp in Waterland, rather small of person, but well made in appearance, and plump of body."[22]

In 1647, Rembrandt hired Hendrickje Stoffels as a live-in servant, and soon she replaced Geertje in his affections. In 1654, Hendrickje was called before the Reformed Church Council to face the accusation of "having committed whoredom with Rembrandt the painter."[23] Pregnant with their daughter Cornelia, she was banned from communion and asked to do penance. Although some artists married their servants, Rembrandt was unwilling to wed Hendrijke at least in part because he would lose an inheritance from Saskia if he did so.[24] Nevertheless, Hendrijcke remained with him until her death in 1663.

Geertje paid a steeper price for her relationship with Rembrandt.[25] He attempted to appease his former lover with an offer of a small alimony, which she rebuffed. Soon the relationship became acrimonious. Geertje sued the painter for breech of promise, and the court ruled that Rembrandt should pay

22 For the translation, see Bob Haak, *Rembrandt: His Life, His Work, His Time*, trans. Elizabeth Willems-Treeman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), 216. The original language is from Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, ed. P. T. A. Swillens, part I (Maastricht: Leiter-Nypels, 1943), 214: "Hij had ten Huisvrouw een Boerinnetje van Raarep, of Ransdorp in Waterlant, wat klein van persoon maar welgemaakt van wezen, en poezel van lichaam."

23 Mariët Westermann, *Rembrandt* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 237. The full quote is "Hendrickie Jaghers voer de vergadering verschenen zijnde, bekent dat se met Rembrant de schilder Hoererije heeft gepleecht, is daerover ernstelijck bestraft, tot boervardicheijt vermaent en van den taffel des Herren afgehouden," for which see *Rembrandt's Women*, ed. by Julia Lloyd Williams (New York: Prestell, 2001), 259, note 11.

24 When the Antwerp painter Pieter van Lint was widowed after thirty-five years of marriage, he wed his servant Anna Moren, with whom he had three sons." Lint, Peter Van," *Benezit Dictionary of Artists. Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed October 15, 2016, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/benezit/B00110194.

25 For the documents relating to Geertje Dircx, see C. Hofstede de Groot, *Die Urkunden über Rembrandt (1575–1721)* (The Hague: Marinut Nijhoff, 1906), 130–52, 186–87, nos. 113, 117–18, 120–23, 165. For this episode, see also H. F. Wijnman, "Een episode uit het Leven van Rembrandt; De Geschiedenis van Geertje Dircks," *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 60 (1968): 103–18; S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, "Rembrandt: His Life, his Wife, the Nursemaid and the Servant," 19, 24; 161 (cat. no. 78); 220 (cat. no. 126) in *Rembrandt's Women*; Simon Schama, *Rembrandt's Eyes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 544–59.

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her two hundred guilders a year for the rest of her life, and that she should leave the jewelry that Rembrandt had given her to his son Titus upon her death. When she later pawned some of this jewelry, which had been Saskia's, Rembrandt had her committed to a Spinning House, that is, a women's workhouse. Friends tried to have her released, but Rembrandt fought to keep her incarcerated and threatened one of her supporters by shaking his finger at her and warning that if she tried to gain Geertje's freedom, she would regret it. Despite letters of protest from Rembrandt, Geertje was released after five years, but died soon afterwards.

This narrative reads like contemporary popular literature, which often portrays servants who try to manipulate the widowers for whom they work. For example, an anonymous tract of 1682, titled *Zeven duivelen, regerend de hedendaagsche dienstmaagden* (*The Seven Devils Ruling Maidens Nowadays*), asserts, "No one has more trouble with maidservants than widowers."[26] According to this book, servants coddle widowers, wear seductive clothing, and get their masters drunk, all in the hopes of marrying them. After marriage, they embezzle the families' assets. Reinforcing these words are images, such as one of a thieving maid stealing from a pantry while turning her head to see if she is being observed.[27] Such texts and images undoubtedly influenced the outcomes of court cases like Geertje's.

But class prejudices are not confined to the past. In a publication of 1984, one author asserts that Hendrijcke's "simpler background may not have given her the art of conversation."[28] Similarly, in 2001, another author asked, "Were Rembrandt's reduced circumstances due to Geertje Dircks? One clue is that she had appropriated an expensive rose-cut diamond ring."[29] The use of the word "appropriated" flattens the complexities of the situation, and Mariët Westermann offered a more just interpretation when she concluded that "Rembrandt's affairs can hardly be held responsible for his financial woes."[30]

Maria van Oosterwijk, a specialist in flower painting, had a very different relationship with her servant Geertje Pieters, who was probably a distant

26 Anonymous, *Zeven duivelen, regerend de hedendaagsche dienstmaagden* (1682), quoted by Carlson, "Domestic Service in a Changing City Economy," 199. For the legal regulation of servants, see Carlson, "'There is No Service Here but my Service'," 225–34.

27 See Sarnowiec, "De zeven zonden van het dienstmeisje." For legal cases involving servants, see G. M. E. Dorren, *Eenheid en verscheidenheid. De burgers van Haarlem in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Prometheus), 61–64.

28 Christopher White, *Rembrandt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 129.

29 Van Heel Dudok, "Rembrandt: His Life, his Wife, the Nursemaid and the Servant," 24.

30 Westermann, *Rembrandt*, 237.

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relative.[31] Termed a "dienstmagt" in Houbraken's biography, Pieters' role is confirmed by the activities that he ascribes to her, such as preparing van Oosterwijk's paints and retrieving her coat from a neighbor.[32] Mistress and maid together visited Constantijn Huygens, who wrote a poem that confirms that Pieters was the painter's servant.[33] Van Oosterwijk taught Pieters to paint, and eventually she became an artist in her own right.[34] A flower painting, dated around 1675 and produced in a style that is very close to Van Oosterwijk's, is signed "Gerti Pietersz."[35] Further proof of her output lies in an inventory, dated 1681, of a collection in The Hague, which attributes a painting to her. Both Maria van Oosterwijk and her brother bequeathed Pieters one hundred guilders, and after her mistress's death Pieters lived independently, supporting herself as a painter.[36]

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31 Employers often hired relatives as servants. See Raffaelli Sarti, "Who are Servants? Defining Domestic Service in Western Europe (16th–21st Centuries)," in *Proceedings of the 'Servant Project,'* ed. S. Pasleau and I. Schopp with R. Sarti (Liège: l'Université de Liège, 2006), 4. Pieters was granddaughter of the art collector Melchior Wyntges. For her, see http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1780-1830/DVN/lemmata/data/wyntges (accessed on Dec. 8, 2014), and A. Bredius, "Archiefsprokkelingen. Een en ander over Maria van Oosterwijk, 'vermaert konstschilderesse'," *Oud Holland* 52 (1935): 180–182. For Arnold Houbraken's biography, see *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, ed. P. T. A. Swillens, part II (Maastricht: Leiter-Nypels, 1944), 170–171. For a translation of it, see Julia K. Dabbs, *Life Stories of Women Artists, 1550–1800. Anthropology* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 16.

32 Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh*, part II, 170–71.

33 *De Gedichten van Constantijn Huygens*, ed. by J. A. Worp (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1898), vol. 8, 137. The poem is titled "Met een silver palet geschonken aen Geertje Pieters dienstmaeght, schildersche."

34 Similar cases occurred in Spain. See Maria de los Santos García Felguera, *La Fortuna de Murillo* (*1682–1900*) (Seville: EXCMA, Diputacion Provincial de Sevilla, 1989), 174–75 (I am grateful to Carmen Fracchia for this reference); Jennifer Montagu, "Velázquez Marginalia: His Slave Juan de Pareja and his Illegitimate Son Antonio," *Burlington Magazine* 125 no. 968 (Nov. 1983): 683–84; Antonio Palomino, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors*, trans. Nina Ayala Mallory (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 208; Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *Las Vidas de los pintores y estatuarios eminentes españoles* (London: Samuel Baker and T. Payne, 1744), 102.

35 Marianne Berardi, "Oosterwijk, Maria van," in *Concise Dictionary of Women Artists*, ed. Delia Gazie (New York: Routledge, 1997), vol. 2, 1043–1044; Horst Gerson, *Catalogue of Paintings in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge 1. Dutch and Flemish Schools* (Cambridge: Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, 1960), vol. 1, 98, cat. no. 58. For the inventory, see Adriaan van der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-Life Painters, Working in Oils, 1525–1725* (Leiden: Primavera Press, 2003), 161.

36 See, for similar wills, Katlijne Van der Stighelen, "Van 'marchant' tot 'vermaert conterfeyt': het levensverhaal van Cornelis de Vos," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten* (1991): 87–156. I am grateful to Prof. Van der Stighelen for this reference.

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What can be learned by studying the relationship between artists and their servants? First, artists are implicated in the class system, and considering class as a category of analysis can illuminate their lives and their works. For example, Simon Schama linked Rembrandt's relationship to Geertje Dircx to his most sexually explicit prints, produced around the time that they were lovers.[37] But artists' biographies can also illuminate servants' lives. Dircx's life is so well documented because her master was, to quote one court document, "the honorable and renowned painter" Rembrandt.[38] Similarly, investigating Maria van Oosterwijk's servant reveals a previously unknown path by which women could become professional artists.[39]

2 Portraits of Servants

Although Geertje Dircx owned a portrait of herself, no likeness of her, Hendrijcke Stoffels, or Geertje Pieters can be securely identified today.[40] But it is likely that actual servants posed as models for painted ones.[41] For example, a drawing by Frans van Mieris of a woman of African descent, which served as the basis for a painting of a servant, may well be a portrait of a domestic worker (Figs. 7.1, 7.7).[42]

Similarly, in Jacob Jordaens' self-portrait with his wife and daughter, not only is the servant's face individualized, but also her arthritic hands (Fig. 7.8).[43] If this is a portrait of his servant, however, she has never been identified by name.

37 Schama, *Rembrandt's Eyes*, 543.

38 Hofstede de Groot, *Die Urkunden*, 142; Schama, *Rembrandt's Eyes*, 543 ("eersamen, wijtvermaerden Schilder").

39 This path is not mentioned in Sheila ffolliott's comprehensive study of early modern women artists. See "Early Modern Women Artists," in *Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman, and Katherine A. McIver (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013), 423–43.

40 One of two drawings by Rembrandt showing a woman in a north Holland costume is inscribed on the reverse in a seventeenth-century hand, "De minne moer van Titus," that is, "Titus's nurse." For the inscription, see Otto Benesch, *The Drawings of Rembrandt* (London: Phaidon Press, 1954), vol. 2, 76, cat. nos. 314, 315. Since Titus was not born until 1641 and the drawing is dated before then, the inscription cannot refer to Dircx.

41 Paul Kaplan, "Italy, 1490–1700," in *Image of the Black in Western Art*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), vol. 3, part 1, 181–182 (Pietro Moro), 107–110 (Laura Dianti). I would like to thank Paul Kaplan for this reference and for many fruitful discussions.

42 Van der Ploeg, "Woman before a Mirror," 157–59.

43 See Watteeuw, "Household names," 55. for this painting, and for the sitter's arthritis see Jan Dequeker, "A Physician's View Beyond the Curtains of Seventeenth-Century Flemish

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FIGURE 7.7 Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Head of a Black Woman*, 1650–1681, The British Museum, London

Perhaps the most famous painting of a Netherlandish female servant appears in Frans Hals' portrait of Catharina Hooft and her nurse (Fig. 7.9).[44] An inventory, dated 1709, of the estate of Catharina's son describes it as "a nurse (*minne*)

and Dutch Baroque Portraits," in *Pokerfaced*, ed. by Katalijne van der Stighelen, Hannelore Magnu, and Bert Watteuw (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 101–102.

44 For the identity of the child, see S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, "Een minne een kidje door Frans Hals," *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Geneaologie* 29 (1975): 146–59. For this painting, see Seymour Slive, *Frans Hals* (Washington, London, Haarlem: Prestel, 1989), 154; Quentin Buvelot, "Portrait of Catherine Hooft and her Nurse," in *Dutch Portraits: The Age of Rembrandt and Frans Hals*, ed. Rudi Eckart and Quentin Buvelot (The Hague: Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, 2007), 104, 239.

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FIGURE 7.8 Jacob Jordaens, *Self-Portrait with Family and Servant*, 1621–22, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

with a young child by Frans Hals."[45] The painting must show a nurse rather than a mother because the sitter's ruff is old-fashioned and her garments are plain, which contrasts strikingly with the child's sumptuous lace bib, rich floral-and-vine patterned gold brocade dress, and gold bracelets, necklace, and

45 Slive, *Frans Hals*, 154: "minne met een kindje van Frans Hals." The provenance of the painting may be traced back to its original owner. An inventory composed after Hooft's death in 1691 describes the picture, which was displayed in the salon, as "1 painting of a babe in arms in the direct family line" ("1 schilderij zijnde een kind op de arm 't geslagt Raakende"), for which see ibid., 154. The painting remained in Hooft's house even after she gave it to her son, and was displayed in a room favored by her daughter-in-law. See Klaske Muizelaar and Derek L. Phillips, *Picturing Men and Women in the Dutch Golden Age: Paintings and People in Historical Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 77.

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FIGURE 7.9 Frans Hals, *Catherina Hooft and her Nurse*, 1619–20, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie

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rattle. The nurse offers the girl an apple, as she, in turn, affectionately rests her right hand against the woman's chest. Both figures smile at the viewer, the woman warmly, the child mischievously.[46] The lack of a padded hat, the leads attached to the back of the child's garment, and the length of her dress, which is longer than her legs, suggest that she still needed support to ambulate.

We should not be surprised that the nurse remains unidentified; more than half of Hals' sitters remain anonymous.[47] But Seymour Slive asks why the nurse was included at all, terming it an unusual subject.[48] Caregivers are often pictured in later group portraits of Dutch families, identifiable when the mother, more richly dressed and centrally placed, is also present. Contemporary with Hals' portrait is one showing Sophia Hedwig, Countess of Nassau-Dietz, as Charity with three of her sons.[49] In the background a young woman, presumably a servant, holds a baby, probably the daughter of the Countess. Pieter de Hooch similarly shows in the background of another family portrait a nurse and infant, this time beside a young girl and in a separate room.[50] In portraits by Frans Hals, Gabriel Metsu, and Jacob Ochtervelt, the nurse is placed off to the side, wears a plain black garment with white collar, and holds the child in her arms, much as in Hals' earlier double portrait (Figs. 7.9–7.10).[51]

Although only one Dutch portrait survives of a nurse with her charge but without her employer, examples from other regions are extant. In 1638–39, Philip Fruytiers painted two caregivers with four children of his teacher Peter

46 The painting is undated, but based on the age of Catherina, who was born in December 1618 and the date, February 1619, when she moved to Haarlem where Hals worked, it must have been produced in 1619 or 20. See Pieter J. J. van Thiel, "Frans Hals, Catherina Hooft and her Nurse," in *Dawn of the Golden Age: North Netherlandish Art 1525–1580* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1993), 601.

47 Slive, *Frans Hals*, 9.

48 Ibid., 154.

49 Peter van der Ploeg, "Portrait of Sophia Hedwig, Countess of Nassau-Dietz, as Charity, with her Children," in *Dutch Portraits in the Age of Rembrandt and Frans Hals*, ed. Rudi Eckart and Quentin Buvelot (The Hague: Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, 2007), 168–69.

50 Perry Chapman, "Home and the Display of Privacy," 134 in *Art and Home: Dutch Interiors in the Age of Rembrandt*, ed. Mariët Westermann (Denver: Denver Art Museum and Newark: Newark Museum, 2001).

51 See *Familienglück: Rembrandt und sein Braunschweiger Meisterwerk* (Braunschweig: Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, 2006), 62, fig. 8 for the Ochtervelt portrait. For Hals' portrait see London, National Gallery, inv. no. 2285 (1647–50). In Jan Mijten's portrait, the caregiver is clearly marked as a wet nurse by her bare breast; see Alexandra Nina Bauer, *Jan Mijtens (1613/14–1670): Leben und Werk* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2006), 237–38. Prints also show a child and nurse; see Pieter van den Berge, *A Nurse from Waterland*, ca. 1700.

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FIGURE 7.10 Gabriel Metsu, *Portrait of Jan Jacobsz. Hinlopen and His Family* (*or the Burgomaster Dr. Gillis Valckenier*), c. 1655, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie

Paul Rubens.[52] Although the portrait of Catherina Hooft and his nurse seems exceptional, this is only because it is usually explored in the context of Dutch art. The portrayal by Hals, however, is especially close to an earlier one showing a smiling nurse holding Cosimo II de' Medici, dated 1590.[53] Other Italian examples include Moretto da Brescia's portrait of an unidentified boy with his nurse and Justus Sustermans's painting of Ferdinando III, Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, and their governess.[54] Similarly, in France, Henri and Charles

52 Desmond Shawe-Taylor and Jennifer Scott, *Bruegel to Rubens: Masters of Flemish Painting* (London: Royal Collection Enterprises, 2007), 148. For their possible names, see Watteeuw, "Household names," 63.

53 The anonymous Italian portrait is in the Uffizi, Florence.

54 Moretto's painting, dated 1547–49, is in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Susterman's, ca. 1670, is in the Museo Stibbertin, Florence. Jean van Belcamp painted a triptych for Ann Clifford

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Beaubrun portrayed the Dauphin and his wet nurse, who was shown with a bare breast.[55]

Nurses were included in portraits in part because they often formed a bond of affection with the children in their care. Infants were generally weaned at their first birthday, and then wealthy families hired either their wet nurse or another woman to care for the child.[56] Elisabeth Strouver, hired at the age of sixteen or seventeen, wrote after the death of the four-year-old girl who had been her charge for three years, "A mother could not be more affected by the death of her child than I was; I lay my head against the head of the dead child, and could hardly be stopped, although her face had been terribly disfigured by smallpox."[57] Closer in tone to Hals' portrait is the statement by Constanijn Huygens about a wet nurse that he had hired: "she was a good, kind-hearted woman with a healthy constitution and a steadfast disposition."[58]

Only one Netherlandish portrait of a female servant whose name is known survives, Pieter van der Hulst's likeness of Live Larsdatter, the housekeeper of the Danish scientist Tycho Brahe (Fig. 7.11).[59] She wears a dark dress and large white collar, and holds keys in her right hand and a white cloth in her left. She stands beside a column on which is tacked a paper that cites the date and place of her birth, the place of her baptism, and the date and place of her death. Van der Hulst worked in Denmark in the 1690s, and this portrait was painted in 1698 when Larsdatter was believed to have been well over a hundred years old. This is not the only portrait of an elderly housekeeper; twelve years earlier

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that includes her governess; see Zirka Z. Filipczak, "Portraits of Women Who 'Do not Keep Strictly to the Masculine and Feminine Genders, as They Call Them'," in *Pokerfaced*, 241. By contrast, a portrait by John Riley and Johann Baptiste Closterman shows Katherine Elliot alone. Presumably commissioned by James II or one of his daughters, this painting depicts the woman who had been the king's nurse and later became Dresser and Woman of the Bedchamber to both his wives. See Oliver Millar, *The Tudor, Stuart and Early Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (London: Phaidon Press, 1963), 140. See also J. E. Sartorino, *Nurse with Child*, seventeenth century.

55 Henri and Charles Beaubrun, *The Dauphin Louis of France and his Nursemaid, Dame Longuet de la Giraudiere*, ca. 1638, Versailles, Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

56 Rudolf Dekker, *Childhood, Memory and Autobiography in Holland. From the Golden Age to Romanticism* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 25, 34. Dutch wet nurses earned seven guilders a month according to Ibid., 99.

57 Ibid., 130 (quote); Florence Koorn, "A Life of Pain and Struggle. The Autobiography of Elisabeth Strouven (1600–1661," in *Autobiographien von Frauen: Beiträge zu ihre Geschichte* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996), 13–23.

58 Dekker, *Childhood*, 26.

59 For this painting, see John Robert Christianson, *On Tycho's Island: Tycho Brahe and his Assistants, 1570–1601* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 311.

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FIGURE 7.11 Pieter van der Hulst, *Live Larsdatter*, 1698, Museum of National History, Frederiksborg Castle, Hillerød, Denmark

John Riley painted a portrait of the 'Necessary Woman' Bridget Holmes, who had long served the English royal family.[60]

60 Susan Broomhall and Jennifer Spinks, *Early Modern Women in the Low Countries. Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 122.

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FIGURE 7.12 Anon. (Flemish school), *Family Portrait with Servant*, 1610s, private collection

The two portraits by Dutch painters that feature a female servant by showing her either alone or with a child portray workers of a relatively high status, a nurse and a chief housekeeper (Figs. 7.9, 7.11). Statistics are not available for Southern Netherlandish households, but only 10% of Dutch homes had servants, and the vast majority of those had only one, a maid-of-all-tasks.[61] Such servants appear in portraits, but they cannot be identified by name. One little-known representation of a servant girl who appears in a Flemish family portrait is typical (Fig. 7.12).[62] Dressed much like Jordaens' servant, in a red jacket with raised lace collar and a white apron (Fig. 7.8), her social position is marked by her actions and location. Like Jordaens' maid, the girl serves food, in this case a mound of butter and a ceramic jug of beer, and she stands before the kitchen, the site of her labor. Like so many images of servants, her second-class status is made clear. She is pushed to the far left of the composition and separated from the family she serves by another loyal household member, the dog. In addition to her act of serving food, a small detail suggests that she, unlike the family members, is working: one of her sleeves is rolled up to the elbow baring her strong forearm, as in so many Netherlandish images of female kitchen workers.[63]

61 The wealthiest Dutch households employed more than one servant, including cooks, valets, errand boys, coachmen, laundresses, wet nurses, and maids. See Dekker, *Family, Culture and Society in the Diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr.* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 141, 143.

62 I thank Lawrence Steigrad, President, Peggy Stone, Vice-President, and Alexandria Edelson, Director, of the Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts gallery for information concerning this painting. Rosie Kosinski, formerly employed by the gallery, was also helpful.

63 For other paintings of kitchen workers with raised sleeve and bared forearm, see the those by Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer, and Pieter Cornelis van Rijck, among others. This motif also appears in images of male kitchen workers. For a modern example from the United States, see the poster of Rosie the Riveter.

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Jordaens' monumental portrait of 1621–22 may have been painted to commemorate his election as dean of the Antwerp Guild of St. Luke. In many ways this painting conforms to the dominant paradigm. The artist strikes a gentlemanly stance and his servant, like the courtly garden in which he stands, may have been included to enhance his status. Catherina van Noort, the painter's wife, overlaps the servant, pushing her slightly to the middle ground, and Catherina's face is bathed in light, whereas her servant's is cast in shadow. The servant's clothes and her act of holding a basket of fruit make clear her occupation. Nonetheless Jordaens' depiction is unique among group portraits in its emphasis on the servant. Here she is the central figure and the only one to face frontally. Nor does she function as a negative foil for her mistress as so many other servants do (Figs. 7.1, 7.5, 7.18). She seems no older or uglier than Catherina, for example;[64] in fact, her handsome face is characterized by a subtle, radiant luminosity. She neither bends obsequiously towards her employers nor gazes admiringly at them as so many servants in portraits do. Just as the painting as a whole suggests the harmony and love of Jordaens's family through such standard signs as the the garden of love, the loyal dog, the harmonious lute, and the clinging vine, so does the servant stand for immaterial qualities, contributing to the work's celebration of love, abundance, concord, and fertility.[65]

But why is she such a central figure? Jordaens may have wanted to grant his servant a more important role in order to express his affection for or appreciation of a loyal member of his household. Perhaps, like Geertje Pieters, she was also a distant relative. But in addition she may have been highlighted because Jordaens, unlike his Flemish colleagues Rubens and Van Dyck, was neither a humanist nor a court painter. Because the courts of Spain and

64 See, by contrast, "Roman lady with older servant holding a rosary," in *Album Amicorum of Paul van Dale*, Oxford, Bodlean Library, MS. Douce d. 11, fol. 020r, ca. 1569–1578.

65 For a discussion of these symbols, see Kristi Nelson, "Jacob Jordaens: Family Portraits," *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 8 (1989): 107, 109 [105–119]; R.-A. d'Hulst, "Self-portrait with Parents, Brothers, and Sisters, in *Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678). Vol I. Paintings and Tapestries*, ed. Hans Devisscher and Nora de Poorter (Amsterdam: Royal Museum of Fine Arts, 1993), 54; R.-A. d'Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens*, trans. P. S. Falla (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 270; Hans Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture 1585–1700*, trans. Alastair and Cora Weir (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 125, 127. Nobert Schneider argues, without basis, that this central figure is not a servant because in seventeenth-century family portraits the role of holding a basket of grapes is assigned to a child. He also asserts, without foundation, that she appears to be thirteen to fifteen years old, that the grapes symbolize the strength of the family, and that the figure may be the daughter of Jordaens, and so the painting dates 1628–30. See *The Art of the Portrait* (Cologne: Taschen, 2002), 142.

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Brussels did not favor his work, Jordaens could be free of the restrictions imposed by court decorum.[66] Indeed he was drawn to what Hans Vlieghe terms the "popular element."[67] His early *Adoration*, for example, places an unusual emphasis on shepherds and animals.[68]

Yet despite the major role of the servant, Vlieghe recently interpreted the painting this way:

> [The] portrait Jordaens painted of himself, his wife and their little daughter in 1621–2 may show that he, too, had meanwhile come to understand the importance of the nuclear family as the primary social unit. Here there is again the traditional emblematic play on love, family, harmony and fertility seen in such elements as the arbour in the garden, flowers, fruit and a lute.[69]

It is remarkable that this distinguished scholar terms the figures a nuclear family when the servant is clearly not a member of that category. Indeed, he describes the presence of Jordaens, his wife, his daughter, and even the flowers, lute, and fruit, while failing to mention the large, brightly colored figure at the very center of the composition. The servant remains invisible to him.[70]

Only one of the servants portrayed by Dutch and Flemish painters can be identified, which recalls Pieter J. J. van Thiel's statement that "There is something sad about an anonymous historical portrait. It is the likeness of someone who has died twice, as it were, first physically and then existentially, for a person continues to exist, in a sense, for as long as a portrait keeps his or her memory alive."[71] Yet this group of servants' portraits is exceptional because portraiture was traditionally reserved for the elite, who through lineage or accomplishment were deemed worthy of immortality.[72] What cultural role,

66 Ibid., 35.

67 Ibid., 59.

68 Ibid., 36.

69 Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture*, 127. For fruit as a sign of fertility, see Jan Baptiste Bedaux, "Fruit and fertility: Fruit Symbolism in Netherlandish Portraiture of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Simiolus* 17 (1987): 150–68.

70 Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture*, 127.

71 Van Thiel, "Frans Hals, Catherina Hooft, and her Nurse," 601. Thiel suggests that it derives from images of the Madonna and Child.

72 For other images of servants, see Diane Wolfthal, *Household Help: Images of Servants and Slaves in Europe and Abroad, 1400–1700* (under contract to Yale University Press), and Wolfthal, "Household Help."

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then, do portraits of servants play?[73] Certainly they are at times meant as foils for the elite, since through their dress and location they are marked as lower in rank. When included in a family portrait, servants often add status, since so few Netherlandish households could afford hired help. When servants are portrayed as loyal, industrious, and obedient, they suggest a well-run household, and Live Larsdatter was probably also represented because of her extraordinary longevity.[74] But servants differ from others of low status, such as peasants and beggars, in their intimate long-term contact with the elite. For this reason, they may sometimes have been included at least in part because of ties of affection.

Few of us consider housework an exciting or elevating endeavor, but it is a necessary one. As scholars we must examine our assumptions, including those that exalt some occupations while trivializing others. As art historians, we cannot turn a blind eye to servants, especially when painters like Hals, van der Hulst, and Jordaens sometimes portray them as central figures with great dignity.

3 Doll Houses

In addition to artists' biographies and portraits of servants, material culture can shed new light on domestic workers. The sturdy chamber pots that they washed, the beds that they made, the presses that they screwed tight to produce crisp folds in linen, and the intricate carvings of the massive cupboards that they dusted all offer evidence of the nature of servants' labor.[75] But this essay will focus on another type of object, doll houses. In the last thirty years, scholars have begun to examine early modern Dutch doll houses through surviving inventories, eye-witness accounts, Jacob Appel's painting

73 Joanna Woodall, "Sovereign Bodies: the Reality of Status in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 75–100.

74 Wolfthal, "Household Help."

75 For linen presses, cupboards, and other furniture, see Loek van Aalst, "Dutch Furniture from the Golden Age," in *Golden Dutch and Flemish Masterworks from the Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo Collection*. ed. Frederik J. Duparc (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 344–375. For the varied meanings of brooms, see Eddy de Jongh, *Questions of Meaning: Themes and Motif in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Paintings*, trans. and ed. Michael Hoyle (Leiden: Primavera Press, 1995), 194–214. For Dutch kettles, see Alexandra van Dongen, "'The Inexhaustible Kettle': The Metamorphosis of a European Utensil in the World of the North American Indian," in *One Man's Trash is Another Man's Treasure* (Rotterdam: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 1996), 115–133.

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FIGURE 7.13 The dolls' house of Petronella Oortman, c. 1685–1705, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

after Petronella Oortman's doll house, and the three surviving examples: Oortman's and those commissioned by Petronella de la Court and Petronella Dunois (Figs. 7.13–7.14).[76]

Beginning in the 1980s, Jet Pijzel-Dommisse's flurry of publications comprehensively examined the patronage, provenance, and production of doll houses, and exhaustively catalogued all surviving dolls and furnishings.[77] This led to more interpretive studies. In 2003, Melinda K. Vander Ploeg Fallon explored the collecting practices of Petronella de la Court, and four years later

76 Constance Eileen King, *The Collector's History of Doll Houses, Doll's House Dolls, and Miniatures* (London: R. Hale and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 99–129; Jet Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het poppenhuis Petronella de la Court* (Utrecht: Centraal Museum, 1987); Pijzel-Dommisse, *The 17th-century Dolls' Houses of the Rijksmuseum*, trans. Patricia Wardle (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1994); Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis: Interieur en huishouden in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2000). The Oortman House, built in 1686–90 and furnished in 1690–1705, and the Dunois House of 1676 are in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The de la Court house, dated ca. 1674, is in the Centraal Museum, Utrecht.

77 Ibid.

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FIGURE 7.14 Dolls' house of Petronella de la Court, 1670–1690, Centraal Museum, Utrecht

Susan Broomhall analyzed how women's ideas about household spatial and social ordering were expressed through Dutch doll houses.[78] Finally, in 2010 Michelle Moseley-Christian employed materiality and performance theory to understand how Dutch women interacted with doll houses.[79]

All those who have studied these objects agree that, to quote Broomhall, "here was a world of fantasy, where the house was always clean under the attention of the maids, disciplined children played under the care of a[n] orderly nanny, friends and neighbors enjoyed tea and conversation whilst paying their respect to the new mother, and the master of the house was rarely

78 Linda K. Vander Ploeg Fallon, "Petronella de La Court and Agneta Block: Experiencing Collection in Late Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam," *Aurora* 4 (2003): 95–108; Susan Broomhall, "Imagined Domesticities in Early Modern Dutch Dollhouses," *Parergon* 24 (Nov. 2007), 47–67. Broomhall later published this material in Broomhall and Spinks, *Early Modern Women*, 99–122.

79 Michelle Moseley-Christian, "Seventeenth-Century Pronk Poppenhuisen: Domestic Space and the Ritual Function of Dutch Dollhouses for Women," *Home Cultures* 7.3 (Nov. 2010): 341–363.

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to be seen."[80] As expressions of an upper-class ideal, doll houses differentiate maids from mistresses. Servants wear plainer, coarser garments than the elite, for example, in the de la Court house (Fig. 7.14).[81] But the dolls also suggest a hierarchy among servants. In the de la Court house, the kitchen maid at the lower left wears much rougher clothes – a checked skirt and tan jacket – than the childcare worker in the central vestibule on the middle floor.[82] And in the Dunois house the distinctive work of the wet nurse is made clear by the flap in her bodice that opens to reveal her breasts (Fig. 7.15). This doll, together with the positive statements that Constantijn Huyghens writes about wet nurses, which are cited above, and the idealized family portraits that include wet nurses with one bare breast, serve as a sharp contrast to the widespread movement that promoted mothers' breastfeeding.[83] Jacob Cats wrote extensively in this vein, and reformed authors, including John Calvin and William Perkins, did as well.[84] Similarly, images of Charity and, especially for Catholics, those showing the nursing Virgin contribute to this ideology of motherhood.[85]

Doll houses also distinguish the rooms of the elite from those of servants. In the Oortman house, the maids' living quarters are in the rear of the top floor, hidden from view behind the laundry room at the top left, and sparsely furnished with a bed, chair, and chamber pot (Fig. 7.13). Similarly, in the de la Court house, a wooden divider separates the storage room at the top left from the maid's chamber behind it, which is, in turn, linked to the peat and wood loft to the right (Fig. 7.14). Once again, the servant's room is hidden from view and located in a less desirable part of the house. Furthermore, the servants' rooms are smaller, their beds more simply designed, and their bed linens more modest in pattern and material. By contrast, the rooms of the elite are larger, more centrally placed, and more opulently furnished. These

80 Broomhall and Spinks, *Early Modern Women*, 122.

81 For the seventeenth-century date of these clothes, see Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis*, 169 and 238.

82 King, *The Collector's History of Doll Houses*, 111.

83 For portraits of wet nurses with one breast bare, see notes 51, 55.

84 See Alice Clare Carter, "Marriage Counseling in the Early Seventeenth Century: England and the Netherlands Compared," in *Ten Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations*, ed. Jan van Dorsten, (Leiden and London: Leiden University Press and Oxford University Press, 1974), 94–127, especially 96 note 11 and 98 note 11; for Cats, see the edition of W. J. Hofdijk. Tiel, 1861, 276i and 278ii. For Cats, Calvin, and Dutch breastfeeding practices, also see Frima Fox Hofrichter: "An Intimate Look at Baroque Artists," in *Framing the Family: Narrative and Representation in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, ed. Diane Wolfthal and Rosalynn Voaden. 143–46.

85 For Charity, see the painting cited in note 49, and the title pages of Adrian Hoffer's *Nederduytsche Pöemata*, (Amsterdam: Broer Jansz., 1635).

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FIGURE 7.15 Nurse, Dolls' house of Petronella Dunois, c. 1676, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

features reflect historical reality. A seventeenth-century probate inventory, for example, reveals that two servants in Amsterdam, Lysbeth Arrago and Johanna de Leeuw, shared a bed behind the basement kitchen.[86] Similarly, a glance at

86 See Phillips, *Well-Being*, 47, 213 n. 2.

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the 1617 inventory of the house of Emmanuel Ximenez in Antwerp confirms the radically different living conditions of mistress and maid.[87]

Dutch doll houses display the wealth of their patrons through the abundance and diversity of their furnishings, but in doing so they open a window through which to better understand the lived experience of domestic workers. Although genre paintings and portraits generally show servants performing relatively easy tasks, such as sweeping floors, pouring water for washing, or serving food (Figs. 7.2, 7.6, 7.8, 7.12, 7.18), the cleaning utensils in doll houses make clear that much of what servants did was back-breaking labor: scrubbing pots, pans, and floors, and carrying heavy buckets of water up and down stairs (Fig. 7.16). This is hard for many of us to imagine today with our dishwashers, washing machines, elevators, and vacuum cleaners. A female artist, Geertruyd Roghman, produced a rare suggestion of this grueling work in a print showing a woman with rolled-up sleeves bending low as she scours a platter (Fig. 7.17). Shining in the foreground is the fruit of her labor, the gleaming metal of clean pots.[88]

The objects in doll houses also make clear how skillful early modern servants were. They remind us of tools and practices that have long been forgotten. The lying-in room of Petronella de la Court's house includes tiny sticks that served to smooth bed linens.[89] Stored in the Dunois cellar are miniature syringes used to clean the exterior of upper story windows.[90] A servant in the de la Court house carries a basket of cleaning tools that include a duster made of a bird's wing, probably used on delicate fabrics.[91]

Doll houses are also stocked with a wide variety of ordinary cleaning utensils, each serving a distinct function: indoor and outdoor brooms, and long- and short-handled scrubbing brushes, mops, brooms, and dusters (Fig. 7.16).[92] Doll houses, together with contemporary drawings and prints, like the brushseller's stall by Jan Luyken, make clear the different types of cleaning tools, each with its own distinctive handle, shape, size, and type of bristle, according to its function.[93] Inventories, such as that of the Ximenez home, confirm how

87 For the inventory, which is translated and annotated by Sarah Joan Moran, see http://ximenez.unibe.ch/inventory/reading/ accessed 2/25/17.

88 For this print series on female occupations, see Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Geertruydt Roghman and the Female Perspective in 17th-Century Dutch Genre Imagery," *Woman's Art Journal* 14 (1993–1994): 3–10.

89 King, *The Collector's History of Doll Houses*, 110.

90 Pijzel-Dommisse, *The 17th-century Dolls' Houses*, 42.

91 Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis*. 169.

92 Pijzel-Dommissee, *The 17th-century Dolls' Houses*, 24, 26. One broom is worn down, suggesting that Oortman had used it. See ibid., 26.

93 Luyken's print of a brushseller's stall, dated 1694, is based on his drawing.

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FIGURE 7.16 Scrubbing brushes and street brooms in the cellar of the dolls' house of Petronella Oortman, c. 1690–1700, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

well-equipped with cooking and cleaning tools wealthy households were.[94] A glance at the objects in the laundry rooms of doll houses – the irons, brushes, linen presses, wicker baskets, bowls for sprinkling water before ironing, and racks for hanging wet laundry – make clear the skill needed to dry, starch, press, and iron linen and clothing (Fig. 7.13, upper left; Fig. 7.14, upper right).

Other material remains remind us that servants' work was often dirty. Close-stools and chamber pots that servants emptied and cleaned are included in these doll houses.[95] But this sort of work was not portrayed in paintings, and

94 For the Ximenez inventory, see note 86.

95 In the Oortman doll house, the toilet is in the back of the kitchen and in the Dunois doll house, it is in the upper peat loft. See Pijzel-Dommisse, *The 17th-century Dolls' Houses*, 24, 32; King, *The Collector's History of Doll Houses*, 120.

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FIGURE 7.17 Geertruyd Roghman, "The Scouring Woman," Plate 5 from *Female Activities*, c. 1648–50(?), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

even in doll houses such objects are hidden from view.[96] It may have been servants' contact with such base materials as dirt and excrement that sometimes

96 The doll houses include several servants, which would have been true of only the very wealthiest Dutch homes. The laundresses in such homes were probably outside help, hired once a year to do the entire house's linen, judging by the number of baskets in the laundry room. See King, *The Collector's History of Doll Houses*, 116.

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FIGURE 7.18 Jacob Coeman, *Pieter Cnoll, Cornelia van Nijenrode and their Daughters*, 1665, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

led to their master's desire to make servants invisible. The clearest example of such invisibility is seen in Petronella Oortman's doll house. Here the servants' small bedrooms are not only relegated to the rear of the attic, but are also only dimly and partially visible through two openings in the back wall of the laundry room. In other words, they are hidden not only from the viewer, but also from the elite dolls in the house, since the only adjacent room is the peat and provisions loft, an area not frequented by the master and mistress. Furthermore, servants' tools – buckets, tubs, cooking pots, coal pans, two brooms, and a long-handled scrubbing brush – are stored out of sight in the cellar of this doll house. To view them one must either open a trap-door in the floor of the ground-floor kitchen or pull out the drawer into which the storage room was built and thereby access a peephole. By the late seventeenth century, in upper class homes one ideal for servants – and any signs of their labor – was invisibility.

4 Class, Race, and Gender

Images of servants were transformed from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Large aristocratic households throughout Europe were characterized

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by vast numbers of servants, mostly white boys and men.[97] Although few such households existed in seventeenth-century Holland, they flourished in earlier times and other areas. Fifteenth-century Flemish illuminations, mostly made for courtly patrons, usually show those who serve food and drink, pour water for washing, and help their master dress as small male figures.[98] Boys went into service at a young age, and being a servant was sometimes a temporary, early stage in life, but servants are portrayed as short in stature even when they are clearly represented as adults, such as in the Flemish Spinola Hours, a Dutch prayer book (where the servant is bald), and the Netherlandish Croesinck Hours (where the servant is bearded) (Fig. 7.19).[99]

In these images sometimes class trumps gender. In a *Wedding Feast at Cana* from the Flemish Très Belles Heures, male servants are shown as subservient to women (Fig. 7.20). Whereas the bride wears a full-length dress, sits at center stage and is the only figure to face frontally, the male servant on the left wears a short tunic, is seen from the rear, off to the side, and kneels deferentially before her.[100] What does it say about the relative importance of gender and class that male servants are not only portrayed like their female counterparts – that is off to the side, seen from the back, overlapped by other figures or architecture, and cut off by the frame – but also smaller than and subservient to elite women? This confirms the idea that fifteenth-century servants in aristocratic courts were viewed as not quite men, but rather, even if an adult, still in many ways like a boy or a low-status woman. Indeed some contemporary documents make clear that male servants were considered dependents and treated much like serving women. Yet there is one way in which male servants are differentiated from female ones in early Netherlandish art made for the court: they

97 Diane Wolfthal, "When Did Servants become Men?" in *Rivalrous Masculinities*, ed. Ann Marie Rasmussen and J. Christian Straubhaar (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, in press).

98 See Wolfthal, "When Did Servants become Men?".

99 For Jeremy Goldberg, "Girls Growing Up in Later Medieval England," *History Today*, 45 (1995): 29, being a servant was a stage in life. C. M. agrees states that late-medieval English household servants were "overwhelmingly young." Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 14–15, asserts that they were "usually in their teens and twenties," and that usually being a servant was a temporary stage. See Netherlands, "Pontius Pilate Washing his Hands," New York, Morgan Library, Croesinck Hours, MS. M.1078, fol. 44v, detail, ca. 1494, and North Netherlands, "Pontius Pilate Washing his Hands," The Hague, KB, Prayer Book, 135 E 19, fol. 78v, historiated initial. Even today a waiter may be called *garçon*. See Sarti, "Who are Servants?," 6.

100 For this image, see François Boespflug and Eberhard König, *Les très belles heures de Jean de France, duc de Berry* (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 28.

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FIGURE 7.19 Anon. (Netherlandish school), *Pontius Pilate Washing his Hands*, detail, *Croesinck Hours*, c. 1494, MS. M.1078, fol. 44v, Morgan Library, New York

generally perform different tasks. In fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century images, women are generally shown serving other women, especially as travel companions or aides during and after childbirth.[101] Fifteenth-century Flemish art was often made for merchants and panel paintings of religious narratives are frequently are set in mercantile, rather than courtly, homes. Yet they rarely include female servants; it is only in later art that female servants become dominant.[102]

101 C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999) 34, reports that in late-medieval England the few women and girls who were employed as household servants assisted the ladies of the house.

102 The shift from large numbers of mostly male servants for aristocratic household to one or two female servants in bourgeois homes is traceable by the sixteenth century. See, among others, Carlson, "A Trojan horse of worldliness," 88 and n. 7. Phillips, *Well-being*, 73, concludes that domestic workers were the largest group of wage-earners in seventeenth-century Amsterdam and that more than 95% of Dutch servants were women.

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FIGURE 7.20 Anon., *Miracle at the Marriage at Cana*, from the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*, c. 1380, Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 3903, fol. 67v, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

By the seventeenth century, with the rise of global trade and colonial power, men and women, boys and girls, and those of European, African, and Asian descent are all represented working in the home, and those servants who perform the same duties are often portrayed in a similar way regardless of race and gender. For example, in a drawing by Jacob Jordaens, a black man and a white woman work together in the kitchen (Fig. 7.21).

No hierarchy is visible as they work harmoniously together, their bodies bending towards each other much like the two parts of a parenthesis. Similarly, images of servants offering fruit include a black youth in one portrait, a white youth in another, a white woman in Jordaens' portrait, a black woman in a

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FIGURE 7.21 Jacob Jordaens, *Kitchen Scene*, seventeenth century, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris

still life, and an Indonesian woman in a portrait of a Batavian merchant and his family (Figs. 7.8, 7.18).[103] To cite one last example, both white and black women help their mistress at her toilette (Figs. 7.1, 7.2). If the category of ordinary servant as portrayed in seventeenth-century Netherlandish art was quite diverse, it generally excludes one group: white men. This distinction is made clear in the portrait by van der Helst (Fig. 7.6); here of the three servers, it is the white male who is differentiated through his commanding gesture and more foreground and central position.

In short, over the course of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, Netherlandish images show a change in the way ordinary household servants are depicted, from predominantly white males, even if small in stature, to anything but white men. Similar distinctions between elite men and everybody

103 Julie Berger Hochstrasses, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 208, fig. 229; 213, fig. 123. For the Batavian portrait, which includes two slaves, see Harm Stevens, "Batavian Senior Merchant Pieter Cnoll, His Eurasian Wife and Daughters and Domestic Slaves," in Kees Zandvliet, *The Dutch Encounter with Asia, 1600–1950* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum and Zwolle: Waanders, 2003), 200–202.

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else are found elsewhere in European culture. To cite just one example, early modern Yiddish books repeat the topos that they have been written for women and "men who are like women," that is, those not learned in the holy tongue. As Jerold Frakes observes, "This is a typical ideological move in attempts to debase a language of whatever kind: by relegating it to inferior status within the culture by assigning it to use by members of an inferior group which is by definition also inferior – in this, as in so many cases, women."[104] Netherlandish artists generally marginalized servants, buried them in the shadows, sometimes even dehumanized them. Yet the images discussed here reveal a wide range of reasons why they were represented: to portray the proper management of the home or the high status of the household, to serve as a negative foil for their master or mistress, to reinforce proper class distinctions, and, on rare occasions, to express affection for domestic workers. If we move beyond genre paintings and prints to examine such long-neglected sources as biographies of artists' lives, portraits of domestic workers, and doll houses, we can better understand that servants' work was grueling, dirty, and skilled, and that the gender and race of domestic servants was transformed as global trade and colonial empires expanded. By turning to sources other than Golden Age paintings and prints, we can foreground figures who for too long have been relegated to the background.

104 Jerold C. Frakes, *The Politics of Interpretation: Alterity and Ideology in Old Yiddish Studies* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1989), 16.

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CHAPTER 8

Resurrecting the 'Spiritual Daughters': the Houtappel Chapel and Women's Patronage of Jesuit Building Programs in the Spanish Netherlands

Sarah Joan Moran

On July 21 of 1640, the 100-year anniversary of the founding of the Jesuit order, a short but grand procession took place inside the Antwerp Jesuit church (Figs. 8.1, 8.2).[1] Members of the community's Marian sodality, a confraternity dedicated to the promotion of the cult of the Virgin, carried a statue of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel (Fig. 8.3) from the church's northern lateral chapel, where it had been kept temporarily, back to the southern chapel. The latter had been erected in c. 1620/21–1622 specifically to house this statue, and its walls had just recently been covered with panels of intricately carved, multicolored Italian marble.[2]

This stonework formed part of an integrated decorative scheme in which every surface was adorned with expensive materials and masterfully executed paintings and sculptures. By the middle of the seventeenth century it was arguably the finest space within an astonishingly richly appointed church,

1 This research was conducted with the support of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study.

2 The event is described in a history of the city of Antwerp written by the Jesuit Daniel van Papenbroeck around 1700: 'Apud Patres Societatis interea fiebat ingens apparatus, pro celebrando primo a sua institutione Iubilaeo, collaborantibus imprimis piis illis virginibus, quae sub illorum directione devotam Dea castitatem vitamque profitebantur. Praecelluerunt autem hoc in genere sorores Houtappeliae, quae providi a multis retro mensibus constituerant, fundatum a se piisque parentibus suis sacellum, communemque omnibus sub illius altari sepulturam quam speciosissime exornare marmoribus, qualibus iam ipsum altare circumcirca fulgebat, complexum eximiam penicelli Rubenii tabulam assumptae in coelum Virginis. Quae sub hac populo colenda hactenus steterat Deiparae ex miraculoso Aspricollensi lingo statua, sub titulo REFUGII PECCATORUM; dum novo in opere laboraretur, tantisper delata fuerat ad sacellum Ignatianum. Stetit autem ibi usque ad XXI Julii, quando visum est priori loco restituendam processionaliter circumducere. Ad hanc pompam cohonestandam omnes senae Sodalitates cum facibus praeluxerunt.' In Daniel van Papenbroeck, Joseph Ernest Buschmann, and Frans Hendrik Mertens, *Annales antverpienses ab urbe condita: ad annum MDCC collecti ex ipsius civitatis monementis publicis privatisque latinae ac patriae linguae iisque fere manu exaratis* (Antwerp: J. E. Buschmann, 1845–1848), 406–07.

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FIGURE 8.1 Façade of the Jesuit church, Antwerp, constructed 1615–1621. Marble and gilding
PHOTO: AUTHOR

whose original splendor (diminished by a fire in the nave in 1718 that destroyed the famous ceiling paintings by Rubens) can be glimpsed by the modern viewer in paintings of its interior like that by Sebastiaan Vrancx of c. 1630 (Fig. 8.4).[3] The chapel survives largely intact today (Figs. 8.5, 8.6), and both its

3 For visitors' reactions to the richness of the Jesuit church, some of which single out the chapel of the Virgin for the exceptional costliness and beauty of its decoration, see J. A. Goris, *Lof van Antwerpen. Hoe reizigers Antwerpen zagen van de Xve tot de Xxe eeuw* (Brussels: Standaard, 1940), 79–81; Piet Lombaerde, "Introduction," in *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands: The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, ed. Piet Lombaerde (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008), 24–25.

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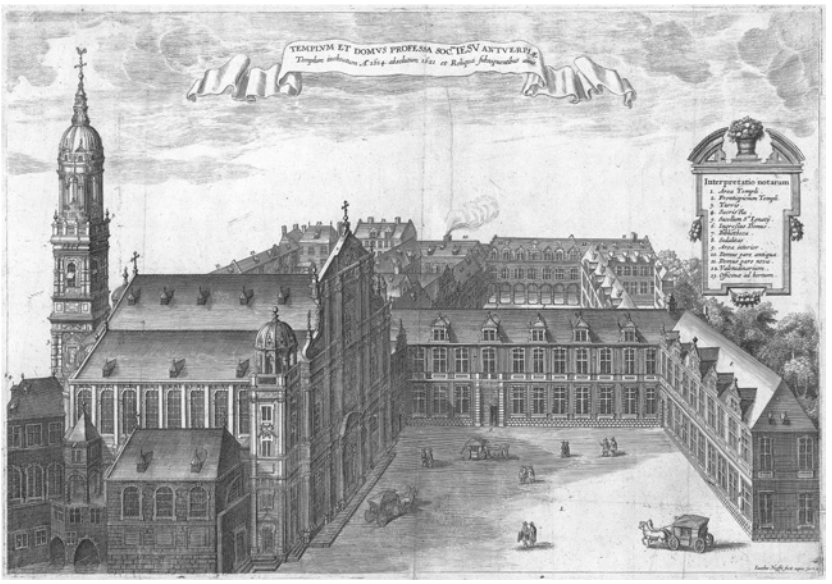

FIGURE 8.2 Jacob Neefs, *Templum et domus professa societatis Iesu*, mid-seventeenth century. Engraving depicting the Antwerp Jesuits' complex built c. 1607–1625. To the left is the church, and on its north side (not visible here) is the chapel of the Virgin, built 1620/21–1625.

sumptuous decoration and innovative, Italianate architecture make it arguably the most important example of the Flemish baroque.

It furthermore represents a remarkably comprehensive defense of Catholic tenets that were denied by Protestants and that lay at the very heart of the religious warfare that defined Low Countries history: the power of the saints and the Virgin Mary to intercede on the part of sinners, the existence of purgatory, the spiritual value of virginity and celibacy, and the validity of religious art itself, including miraculous images like the Scherpenheuvel Virgin. Yet despite its potential to offer insights for historians both of art and architecture and of religion, the chapel has remained understudied by scholars.[4]

4 This is largely a function of two factors: first, that art historians who have worked on the church have been primarily occupied with the role of Rubens in designing its decoration, and the extent of his involvement in the chapel is unclear, and second because a comprehensive, archivally-based study of the church has yet to be undertaken. Various aspects of the chapel are addressed in Rudi Mannaerts, "De artistieke expressie van de mariale devotie der Jezuïeten te Antwerpen (1562–1773). Een iconografisch onderzoek" (KUL, 1983); *Sint-Carolus Borromeus: de Antwerpse jezuïetenkerk, een openbaring* (Antwerp: Toerismepastoraal Antwerpen, 2011), 89–101; Bert Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen: Een*

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FIGURE 8.3 Attributed to Barbara van Ursel, Statue of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, c. 1605, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
PHOTO: AUTHOR

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FIGURE 8.4 Sebastiaan Vrancx, *Interior of the Antwerp Jesuit Church*, c. 1630, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna

FIGURE 8.5 View of the chapel of the Virgin towards the altar
PHOTO: AUTHOR

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FIGURE 8.6 View of the chapel of the Virgin towards the west and north walls
PHOTO: AUTHOR

The present text redresses that lacuna. In contrast to most studies of Jesuit church decoration, which take their material subject matter as an example of or tool to elucidate a broadly Jesuit approach to the visual arts, I seek explanations within the specific local conditions under which the chapel of the Virgin was built. In particular I examine the relationship between the Antwerp Jesuits and the chapel's patrons, the extraordinarily wealthy sisters Maria (1575–1649), Anna (1581–1674), and Christina Houtappel (1585–1657), and their maternal

elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld, Studies stadsgeschiedenis (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2008); Leon Lock, "Rubens and the Sculpture and Marble Decoration," in *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands: The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, ed. Piet Lombaerde (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008); Bert Timmermans, "The Chapel of the Houtappel Family and the Privatisation of the Church in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp," ibid.; Ria Fabri, "Light and Measurement. A Theoretical Approach of the Interior of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp " ibid.; David Freedberg, *Rubens: The Life of Christ after the Passion*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard (New York; London: H. Miller; Oxford University Press, 1984), 149–53; Gertrude Wilmers, *Cornelis Schut (1597–1655): A Flemish Painter of the High Baroque* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 43. Ramash Ramsahoye's Master's thesis of 1993 represents the only previous real effort to investigate the Houtappel sisters' and Anna Sgrevens' identity as patrons based on archival documents (Ramesh Ramsahoye, "The Chapel of our Lady of Scherpenheuvel in the Church of St. Charles Borromeo, Antwerp" (University of London (Courtauld Institute of Art), 1993). I am grateful to Mr. Ramsahoye for sharing his work with me.

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cousin Anna 's Grevens or Sgrevens (1579/80–1638). All four women were 'spiritual daughters': single women who made 'simple' (i.e. not permanently binding) vows of chastity and pursued lives of piety under the direction of male clerics, a lifestyle choice that was especially promoted in the Low Countries by the Jesuits throughout the seventeenth century. This patronage perspective allows us to situate the chapel and its decoration at the interface between the large-scale forces of the Tridentine reforms and the gender dynamics that shaped social behavior, and the small-scale needs of and relationships between individuals. The text further demonstrates the imperative for scholars of the early modern Southern Low Countries to understand its legal system in regards to gender and property in order to avoid the fallacy that only men were positioned to act as important patrons. Women in the region in fact owned and controlled a large proportion of Low Countries wealth, and as the story of the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens shows, the wealthy among them could and did make a major impact on early modern Flemish artistic and religious culture.[5]

In the following pages I thus tell the story of the chapel of the Virgin as embedded within the social, economic, religious, and gendered environment of Antwerp in the seventeenth century. I first give a sketch of the linked histories of the Houtappel and Sgrevens families and the Jesuits of Antwerp from the mid-sixteenth century through their relocation during the Calvinist takeover of the city in 1577–1585, and into the first two decades of the seventeenth century as both groups reestablished themselves. Using archival evidence I then zoom in on the construction and decoration of the chapel of the Virgin, tracing the various stages of its progression over time, and then giving a brief art historical analysis of the chapel as a whole and the ways in which it broadcast fundamental Counter-Reformation messages in the service of societal reform. Finally, I look at the iconography of the chapel and the patronage acts of the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens from a gendered historical perspective, considering the extent to which we can perceive their own choices within the

5 See Sarah Joan Moran, "Inventory of the Marital Property of Emmanual Ximenez and Isabel da Vega: Notes for Interpretation," in *The Worlds and Possessions of the Portuguese Merchant-Banker Emmanuel Ximenez (1564–1632)*, eds. Christine Göttler and Sven Dupré (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) (in press), Philippe Godding, "Le droit privé dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux du 12e au 18e siècle", in: Mémoires de la Classe des lettres (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 1987), 271; Laura Van Aert, "Tussen norm en praktijk. Een terreinverkenning over het juridische statuut van vrouwen in het 16de-eeuwse Antwerpen," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 2, no. 3 (2005): 22–42; "The Legal Possibilities of Antwerp Widows in the Late Sixteenth Century," *History of the Family* 12 (2007): 282–295.

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decorative program, and what it would have meant to these women to build, adorn, and ultimately be buried in such an extraordinary space.

1 Family and Historical Background

The Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens (see family tree, Figure 8.7) belonged to the wealthy merchant class that had profited during Antwerp's economic heyday in the early and mid-sixteenth century.[6] Kinship and professional ties in this group were tightly intertwined, and among the Houtappels' relatives and business contacts the names Boot, della Faille, de Decker(e), and de Smidt appear particularly often.[7]

The sisters' father, Godfried Houtappel (1543–13/01/1626), partnered with the brothers Simon and Pascal de Decker in the early modern equivalent of an import/export firm with branches in Antwerp, Venice, and Naples, and by the 1570s they had also established a branch in Cologne.[8] In 1571 Godfried

6 The family tree is constructed using information from the epitaphs that were originally installed in the crypt chapel beneath the chapel of the Virgin (removed during the French occupation) as reproduced in Papenbroeck, Buschmann, and Mertens, *Annales antverpienses ab urbe condita: ad annum MDCC collecti ex ipsius civitatis monementis publicis privatisque latinae ac patriae linguae iisque fere manu exaratis*, 411–13.; from Antonio (Antonius) Houtappel's will of December 23, 1617 (State Archive Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, T14/015.02–185); from Francis de Decker, "La famille anversoise des Houtappel," *L'intermédiaire des généalogistes* 12 (1957): 338–345; and from Félix-Victor Goethals, *Dictionnaire généalogique et héraldique des familles nobles du royaume de Belgique*, vol. 1 (Brussels: Polack-Duvivier, 1849), 404–06. As Antonio's will lists only Francisco, Maria, Anna, Christina, and Lucretia as his siblings, one can reasonably infer that the others were deceased by the time of its writing.

7 Roland Baetens, *De nazomer van Antwerpens welvaart: de diaspora en het handelshuis De Groote tijdens de eerste helft der 17de eeuw*, 2 vols. (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1976), 146–148; Gertrud Susanna Gramulla, *Handelsbeziehungen Kölner Kaufleute zwischen 1500 und 1650*, Forschungen zur internationalen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (Cologne, Vienna: Böhlau, 1972), 212–219, 234; W. Brulez, "De diaspora der Antwerpse kooplui op het einde van de 16e eeuw," *Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 15 (1960): 279–306, 219.

8 Gustaaf Asaert, *1585: De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2004), 109. Somewhat later Godfried would also partner with his wife's half-nephew, Michel Boot, who would be his most important business associate during the later years in Antwerp and who was also a major supporter of the Antwerp and Brussels Jesuits. See Gertrud Susanna Gramulla, *Handelsbeziehungen Kölner Kaufleute zwischen 1500 und 1650*, Forschungen zur internationalen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (Cologne, Vienna: Böhlau, 1972), 217–18. Félix-Victor Goethals, *Dictionnaire généalogique et héraldique des familles nobles du royaume de Belgique*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Brussels: Polack-Duvivier, 1849), 405.

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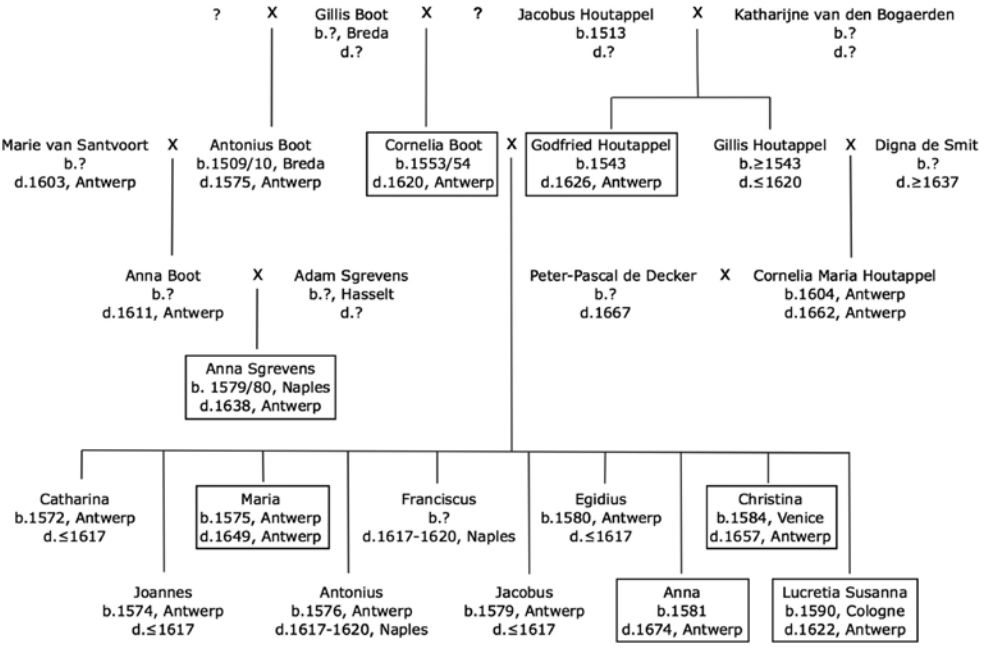

FIGURE 8.7 Houtappel and Sgrevens family tree

married Cornelia Boot (c. 1553–17/09/1620), with whom he would have at least ten children, five sons and five daughters.[9] As Protestant sentiments rose in

9 Godfried's and Cornelia's dates of death are known from their epitaphs, as reproduced by Papenbroeck:

(1) 'H. S. E. Dominus Godefridus Houtappel, Dominus in Ranst, filius Iacobi, iurisconsulti, urbis huius, ob sua in eam merita adversus Martinum Rossemium, decimum septimum senatoris quod munus ipse suspicere quam suscipere maluit, sua se virtute negotiisque involvens; vir antiquae sinceritatis et fidei, qua pupillorum domus mortuales septenas religiosissime administravit; pietatis affectu sacellum hoc Deiparae, cum filiabus virginibus et nepte Anna Sgrevens, iacto primo lapide, aedificavit; quod hae dein, omni sacra supellectile instructum, marmoreum fecere. Obiit anno Salutis M.DC.XXVI, aetatis suae LXXXIII, die XIII Ianuarii. Parenti optimo filiae hoc honoris monumentum posuere. Vixit sine lite. Non intres in iudicium cum servo tuo, Domine. PS. C.XLII.'

(2) 'H. S. E. Dom. Cornelia Boot, coniux lectisima D. Godefridi Houtappel, cui undecim liberos dedit, qua Antverpiae in patria, qua Venetiis, qua Coloniae prognatos; filios quinque, quos omnes sibi ac terris eripi aequanimis tulit; filias sex, quarum quaternas Mariam, Annam, Christinam, Lucretiam, virgines castas, mundo mortuas, laeta Deo obtulit; quibus ipsa fuit quod Paula Eustochio, quod Iuliana Demetriadi; matrona pientissima, in Societatem Iesu iuxta ac pauperes materne benefica; migravit anno Domini M.DC.XX, matrimonii XLIX, aetatis LXVII, die XVII Septembris. Parenti, optime de se meritae, filiae virgines hoc amoris monumentum posuere. Matri filiarum laetanti aeterna gaudia tu comprecare.'

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the Low Countries, spilling over into a wave of iconoclasm during the 'miracle year' of 1566–67 and the start, in 1568, of armed insurrections against Spain led by William of Orange, the Houtappels and their circle remained staunchly Catholic, supporting the fledgling Jesuit community that had arrived in Antwerp in 1562 to combat the spreading 'heresy.' The order's mission was to defend the Catholic tenets that Protestants denied – the doctrine of the Trinity, spiritual merit accrued through good works, the existence of purgatory, the power of the saints and the Virgin Mary to intercede on the part of sinners, the existence of miraculous images and the validity of religious art in general, and the spiritual value of virginity and celibacy – and to increase the laity's engagement with orthodox piety.[10] Among the Jesuits' strategies was the establishment of colleges in which both the liberal arts and Catholic theology were taught, and Godfried Houtappel was one of the donors towards the founding, in 1574, of the Jesuit college in Antwerp.[11]

That institution was, however, short-lived. Protestants gained control of the city and declared it a Calvinist Republic in 1577, expelling the Jesuits in 1578 and the other religious orders in 1579, and banning Catholic worship altogether in 1581.[12] Many of the Antwerp Jesuits took refuge in Cologne, whose community was one of the order's most vibrant.[13] Cologne was also the destination for many of the wealthy Catholic families who left for more

10 On the Antwerp community's history and its profound impact on religious reform in the Spanish Netherlands see Marie Juliette Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585–1676): kerkelijk leven in een grootstad* (Brussels: Paleis der Academié, 1995); Alfred Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas: établissement de la Compagnie de Jésus en Belgique et ses développements jusqu'a la fin du règne d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 2 vols. (Brussels: Lamertin, 1928); Ludovicus Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden* (Antwerp: Ruusbroec-Genootschap, 1961). On the Jesuits more broadly, John W. O'Malley, ed., *The Jesuits I: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, and *The Jesuits I: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999 and 2006); Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

11 Marinus, "Kampionen van de contrareformatie, 1562–1773," in *Antwerpen en de jezuïeten, 1562–2002*, ed. Herman Van Goethem (Antwerp: UFSIA, 2002), 14. Shortly after its founding the college had around 300 male students drawn largely from wealthy mercantile families. On the Jesuit colleges generally, see Aldo Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1986).

12 See Guido Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis, 1550–1577* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); "From Prosecuted Minority to Dominance: The Changing Face of the Calvinist Church in the Cities of Flanders and Brabant (1577–1585)," in *Reformed Majorities in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. Marius J. Lange van Ravenswaay and H. J. Selderhuis (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Gmbh & Co, 2015).

13 Marinus, "Kampionen van de contrareformatie, 1562–1773," 16.

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religiously hospitable environments during these tumultuous years,[14] though the Houtappel-Boots-Sgrevens group seem first to have gone to Italy. By 1579 or 1580 Anna Sgrevens's parents, Anna Boot and Adam Sgrevens, were in Naples, where their daughter was born.[15] Godfried and Cornelia probably left Antwerp in or just before 1581, as their own daughter Anna – their seventh or eighth child – was born that year but is not recorded in the Antwerp parish records.[16] The couple were in Venice in 1584, when Cornelia gave birth to Christina Houtappel, and Gottfried is recorded there in 1586–1587.[17] By 1590, however, they had joined other Antwerp exiles in Cologne, where their last child, Lucretia Susanna, was born. In 1597 they had their portraits painted by the émigré Flemish artist Geldop Gortzius (Figs. 8.8 and 8.9).

They were likely still residing in Cologne in 1601/02 when Anna Muns (later called Moens), then fifteen years old and a native of the city, joined their household staff. She would remain with the family for the rest of her life and

14 On the flight of Antwerp merchant families in this period, see Gramulla, *Handelsbeziehungen Kölner Kaufleute zwischen 1500 und 1650*; Asaert, *1585: De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders*.

15 We know that Anna Sgrevens was born in Naples from her epitaph: 'Domicella Anna Sgrevens, filia Adami, Hasseleto oriundi, et Annae Boot, Antverpianae, Neapoli nata, hic conditur; quae cognatae suae Mariae Houtappel, morum suorum a teneris magistrae, etiam defunctae subiacere voluit, cuius virtutes eximie expressit pietate, modestia, longanimitate et Crucis amore, vere virgo Deo devota, virginum sponso iuncta anno Christti M.DC.XXXVIII, aetatis LVIII, die XVIII Octobris. Cognatae et convictrici suavissimae Anna et Christina Houtappel hoc, velut sorori, monumentum posuerunt, anno M.DC.XLIX. Bene precatus, acclama, Lector: O quam pulchra est casta generatio! Sap. XV.' About Adam Sgrevens I have been able to find almost nothing, but a certain Gaspar Sgrevens (or Scrittoris), very likely a relative, is recorded as a silk merchant in the 1570s in Naples where he acted as an agent for the Antwerp della Faille family. The latter in turn had close ties to Houtappels and would later also be major patrons of the Antwerp Jesuits. See Wilfrid Brulez, *De firma della Faille en de internationale handel van Vlaamse firma's in de 16e eeuw* (Brussels: Palais der Academiën, 1959), 35, 68, 222, 84, 301.

16 Their first six children had all been baptized in the Antwerp cathedral, ending with Egidius on November 11, 1580. See De Decker, "La famille anversoise des Houtappel," 343.

17 See Christina's epitaph for her birthplace: 'Domicella Christina Iustina Houtappel, anno M.D.LXXXV, nata Venetiis, in omen futurae virtutis, primam appellationem traxit a Christo, Christi dein sponsa futura, Christinae Virginis Martyris imitata pietatem, relictum sibi a pientissimis parentibus aurum conflavit in alimenta pauperum, ornatum ecclesiae huius, et fundationem Collegii Antverpiensis, una cum tribus sororibus et cognata; mirabilis etiam cum Christina Belgica fortitudine animi in diuturna corporis infirmitate, Iustinae alterius, tutelaris suae, in consequenda virginitatis laurea constans aemulatrix; tandem die XVIII Ianuarii, anno M.DC.LVII, aetatis suae LXXII, placidissime, ut vixerat, decessit, iubilaeo a dicata Deo virginitate proxima. Illud in coelis agenti perenne hoc soror superstes monumentum posuit.' On Godfried in Venice, see Gramulla, *Handelsbeziehungen Kölner Kaufleute zwischen 1500 und 1650*, 217, note 2.

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FIGURE 8.8 Geldop Gortzius, *Portrait of Cornelia Boot*, 1597, The Hermitage, St. Petersberg

apparently developed a deep bond with the Houtappel sisters, who in 1646 granted her the remarkable (for a servant) honor of being buried in the family crypt beneath the chapel of the Virgin.[18]

18 Her epitaph was made of marble and installed in the floor; it is the only one still *in situ*: 'Hic iacet Anna Moens, Coloniensis: quae in domo Houtappel per annos XLV, tam

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FIGURE 8.9 Geldop Gortzius, *Portrait of Godfried Houtappel*, 1597, The Hermitage, St. Petersberg

It was during their time in Cologne that the family became involved with the spiritual daughter movement. Much research remains to be done on that

singulari modestia reverentiaque ultimo die quam primo est famulata; obiit IV Ianuarii, M.DC.XLVI, aetatis LX.'

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movement, whose origins have not been studied and which has not been looked at from a European perspective (what studies exist are highly localized).[19] We can nevertheless characterize it as a Tridentine iteration of a long tradition of women rejecting marriage to embrace religious chastity without joining a convent, which went back at least to the *mulieres religiosae* of the High Middle Ages.[20] Individual women were drawn to such lifestyles both for religious reasons and because they offered a degree of independence that they would not have had had they married or professed as nuns (which along with other restrictions entailed, respectively, reduced control over or renunciation of their personal property). In the context of confessional warfare religious celibacy took on a new political weight, and the Roman Church vehemently defended the value of female virginity in particular. The subsequent tightening of enclosure restrictions on contemplative nuns, whose potential for sexual incontinence

19 On the French context, see Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women & Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990). Mexican and Spanish examples are discussed in J. Michelle Molina, "Technologies of the Self: The Letters of Eighteenth-Century Mexican Jesuit Spiritual Daughters," *History of Religions* 47, no. 4 (2008): 282–303; Isabelle Poutrin, "Una lección de teología moderna: la 'Vida Maravillosa de doña Marina de Escobar' (1665)," *Historia Social*, no. 57 (2007): 127–143. Perhaps the most attention has been given to the Low Countries, where in the South they were colloquially known as *kwezels*, while in the Protestant United Provinces they were more often called *klopjes* or *kloppen*. On the South, see Maurice de Vroede, *'Kwezels' en 'zusters'. De geestelijke dochters in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Brussel: Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1994); Michel Nuyttens, *Monasticon van devote gemeenschappen in de Provincie West-Vlaanderen tijdens het Ancien Régime* (Brussel: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2001); *Kwezeltjes danzen niet. Kwezels en devote gemeenschappen in Vlaanderen in de 17de–18de eeuw* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2013). M. Janssens, "Geestelijke dochters in het Waasland," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 40, no. 306–342 (1966); Heidi Deneweth, "Spanningen tussen geestelijke dochters, families en geestelijke leiders te Brugge (17de en 18de eeuw)," *Handelingen van het genootschap voor geschiedenis* 141 (2004). On the North, see Marit Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden: leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996); Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008), 43–44; Gerrit Vanden Bosch, "Pionnen op een schaakbord? De rol van klopjes in de belangenstrijd tussen jezuïeten en seculiere priesters in de Republiek omstreeks 1609–1610," *Trajecta* 9, no. 3 (2000): 252–283; Elizabeth Schulte van Kessel, *Geest en Vlees in godsdienst en wetenschap. Opstellen over gezagsconflicten in de seventiende eeuw* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1980), 51–91; Peter van den Elsen, "Gemertse kwezels uit de hoek!," *Gemerts Heem* 4 (1987): 110–127. Eugenia Theissing, *Over klopjes en kwezels* (Utrecht: Dekker en Van de Vegt, 1935).

20 See Veerle Fraeters and Imke de Gier, eds., *Mulieres Religiosae: Shaping Female Spiritual Authority in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

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was a danger to the Church's reputation, is well-known to scholars;[21] however, new research is showing that in many places this coincided with increased support for un- or semi-enclosed female communities that combined a vow of chastity with direct engagement with the world; examples include the Low Countries the Beguines, Spanish *beatas*, teaching congregations, and variety of active tertiary convents.[22] While Church officials remained anxious about the difficulty of regulating these movements, the concerns seem to have been outweighed by having such women visible in society as pious exemplars who were also often engaged as free labor in teaching children catechism. Women pursuing such a lifestyle outside of a community presented more of a regulatory challenge, and the advent of the spiritual daughter movement solved that problem by making a close, personal relationship with a professed male cleric as 'spiritual father' a defining aspect of these women's lives.

The Jesuits, whose mission was based in active engagement with the laity, may well have founded the movement; in later decades in the Low Countries they were clearly its strongest supporters. Spiritual daughters are recorded in Antwerp before the Dutch Revolt, and in the early seventeenth century there were an estimated 400 of these women living in Cologne, quite likely due to the Jesuits' strong presence there.[23] It was in this environment that Maria Houtappel made her vows as a spiritual daughter in 1596, when she was about twenty-one years old.[24] Her younger sisters Anna, Christina, and Lucretia

21 Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State*, Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Mary Laven, "Sex and Celibacy in Early Modern Venice," *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 4 (2001): 865–888; ibid.; Saundra Weddle, "'Women in Wolves' Mouths': Nuns' Reputations, Enclosure and Architecture at the Convent of the Le Murate in Florence," in *Architecture and the Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Helen Hills (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

22 See for example Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women & Church in Seventeenth-Century France*; Craig Harline, "Actives and Contemplatives: The Female Religious of the Low Countries Before and After Trent," *The Catholic Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (1995): 541–567; Sarah Joan Moran, "Bringing the Counter-Reformation Home: the Domestic Use of Artworks at the Antwerp Beguinage in the Seventeenth Century," *Simiolus* 38, no. 3 (2016): 144–158.

23 De Vroede, *'Kwezels' en 'zusters'. De geestelijke dochters in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden*, 51.

24 This is known from Maria's epitaph: 'Domicella Maria Houtappel, virgo eximia, hic deposita, nata Antverpiae, abdicato Coloniae mundo muliebri, virginitatis vexillum redux in patriam intulit. Constanti vitae tenore quasi regulam professa, omnibus admirationi fuit; cilicia, disciplinas, aliasque austeritates in extremum vitae annum protraxit; raro in publico aut orans aut laborans, domi prope latuit, corde humilis, verbis gravis, animo excelsa, sibi parca, aliis larga, in Dei cultum, in Deiparae honorem profusa; status sui virginalis Iubilaeum, anno Domini M.DC.XLVI, festo S. Ursulae, sacro Eucharistico, novem choris musicis exultabunda celebravit. Anno M.DC.XLIX, aetatis LXXIV, die XVIII Februarii, post probatam Deo gravibus morbis patientiam, ad iubilantium virginum

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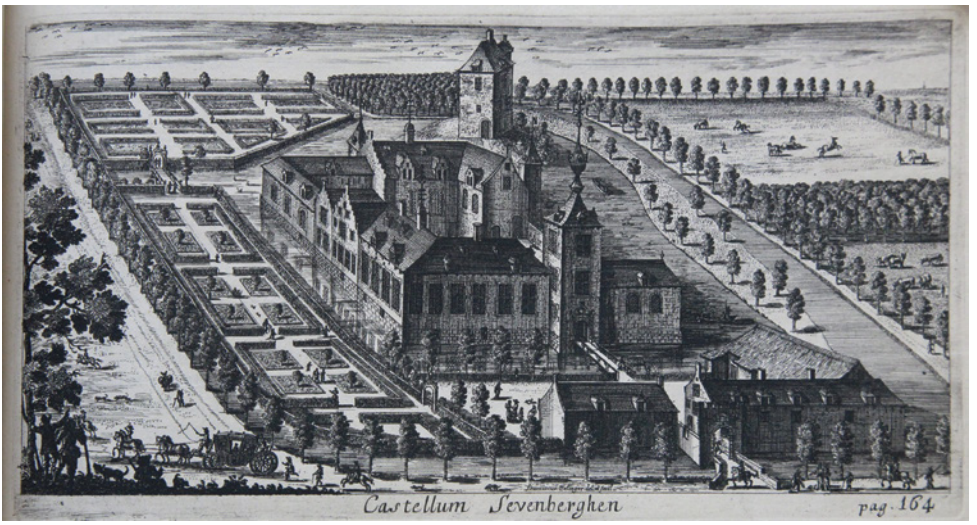

FIGURE 8.10 Franciscus Ehrlinger, *Castellum Sevenberghen*, in Jacob le Roy, *Notitia Marchionatus Sacri Romani Imperii hoc est urbis et agri Antverpiensis*, Antwerp, 1678

would all follow in her footsteps, as would Anna Sgrevens, whose epitaph states that from a young age she viewed Maria as a "pious example" and a teacher.

By 1607 Godfried Houtappel and Cornelia Boot had returned to Antwerp, where they bought a large house called "The Big Ruby" (*Den grooten Robyn*) and three adjacent houses on the Lange Nieuwestraat, a posh area situated between the cathedral and St. James's church.[25] In 1609 they also purchased the castle Zevenbergen, a landed estate about ten kilometers away, which gained Godfried the title of Lord of Ranst and elevated the family to the ranks of the nobility. Over the following years the couple would spend over 30,000 guilders restoring the castle, which was pictured in Jacob le Roy's 1678 illustrated volume on the castles, monasteries, and monuments around Antwerp (Fig. 8.10).[26]

Cornelia's cousin and Anna Sgrevens's mother, Anna Boot, had returned to Antwerp by January of 1611 when she died a widow (the fate of her husband Adam Sgrevens is unknown). She would be buried in the yet-uncompleted choir of St. James's.[27] In the same year Godfried also purchased burial rights

choros transiit, genuina S. P. Ignatii filia: sorores Anna et Christina, suae velut in Christo genitrici, hoc doloris sui monumentum posuere. Tu defunctam piis votis prosequere.'

25 De Decker, "La famille anversoise des Houtappel," 342.

26 Ibid.

27 P. Génard, *Verzameling der graf- en gedenkschriften van de provincie Antwerpen*, vol. II.1 (Antwerp: Buschmann, 1863), 19, 37.

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there for himself and his family, although as we shall see these would not be used.[28]

With their four surviving daughters at home and pledged to remain unmarried, the perpetuation of Godfried and Cornelia's biological legacy was in the hands of two surviving sons, Antonius and Franciscus, who are recorded as living together in a house on the Piazza Monteoliveto in Naples in December of 1617.[29] These two young men would however die before their mother passed on 17 September 1620 (her epitaph stated that her sons had all been "snatched from her"), leaving only Maria, Anna, Christina, and Lucretia Susanna as the couple's heirs.[30] These four women then by law would have inherited their mother's half of the marital estate on her death, and Cornelia likely also left much of her personal property to her daughters (though without her will we cannot be sure). They must have used this money to build the chapel of the Virgin, which was begun around the same time. Lucretia then died on October 31 of 1622, and her epitaph states that she left her property to her sisters "to be given back to God, lest they build, donate, and adorn a temple of God without her." On January 13 of 1626 Godfried died, at which point the remaining half of the marital estate passed to Maria, Anna and Christina.

2 The Reestablishment of the Jesuits in Antwerp and Their Controversial New Church

The Jesuits had returned to Antwerp immediately upon the city's fall to Spanish forces in August of 1585, and they made the city their center of operations in the Low Countries.[31] While the Houtappels were still in Cologne, probably

28 De Decker, "La famille anversoise des Houtappel," 343, note 35.

29 State Archive Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, Stukken betreffende de schenkingen door de zusters Anna, Christina, en Maria Houtappel en Anna 's Grevens, T14/015.02–185: testament of Antonius or Antonio Houtappel, December 23 1617.

30 For Cornelia's exact death date, de Decker, "La famille anversoise des Houtappel," 342.

31 On the community's history and its profound impact on religious reform in the Spanish Netherlands, see Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585–1676): kerkelijk leven in een grootstad*; "Kampionen van de contrareformatie, 1562–1773"; Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas: établissement de la Compagnie de Jésus en Belgique et ses développements jusqu'a la fin du règne d'Albert et d'Isabelle*; Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*; Alfons K. L. Thijs, *Van geuzenstad tot katholiek bolwerk: Antwerpen en de contrareformatie* (Antwerp: Brepols, 1990); Jeffrey M. Muller, "Jesuit Uses of Art in the Province of Flanders," in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. J. W. O'Malley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

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waiting to see if the financial situation in Antwerp would stabilize, the Jesuits set to work establishing their presence and re-Catholicizing the region.[32] In September the college was reopened and Francis Coster founded a Marian sodality to promote devotion to the Virgin Mary, who was now a symbol of the Catholic Church and all of its tenets that Protestants had denied and who would be held up as Antwerp's patron and protector.[33] In this early period numerous Jesuit writers, including Coster, Jan David, Peter Canisi, and Carolus Scribani (1561–1629), whom the Houtappel family may have known in Cologne and who would act as their spiritual father in Antwerp, began publishing works on Catholic theology and devotion in order to spread their messages.[34] Jesuits were also instrumental in helping the archdukes Albert and Isabella create a new Marian pilgrimage site at Scherpenheuvel based around the miraculous healing powers of its resident cult image, and in or shortly before 1606 Albert gave the Antwerp Jesuits a 'copy' of that image, made of wood from the oak tree in which the original Scherpenheuvel Virgin had reportedly appeared.[35] It is that copy – believed to carry the miraculous essence of its original and thus quite a powerful object – for which the Houtappel chapel would later be built.

From their return to Antwerp in 1585 the Jesuits received crucial financial support from a number of local wealthy families who donated large sums of money and real estate. Many of their offspring became involved directly with the Jesuits by either professing at the community (whose numbers swelled from 25 in 1601 to 157 in 1619) or taking vows as spiritual daughters and using their fortunes to further the Jesuits' mission.[36] The first known indication of the Houtappel women's patronage relationship with the Jesuits is an act of

32 A useful timeline for the Antwerp Jesuits can be found in Mannaerts, *Sint-Carolus Borromeus: de Antwerpse jezuïetenkerk, een openbaring*, 8–11.

33 See Muller, "Jesuit Uses of Art in the Province of Flanders," esp. 129.

34 Scribani attained his Master's degree in Cologne in 1582; see Abraham Jakob van der Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden: bevattende levensbeschrijvingen van zoodanige personen, die zich op eenigerlei wijze in ons vaderland hebben vermaard gemaakt*, vol. 17.1 (Haarlem: Brederode, 1874), 581–82. On publications by the Antwerp Jesuits in the early seventeenth century, see Paul Begheyn, *The Jesuits in the Low Countries 1540–1773: Apostles of the Printing Press* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). Important information on the production of various editions is also found in Dirk Imhof, *Jan Moretus and the Continuation of the Plantin Press. A Bibliography of the Works Published and Printed by Jan Moretus I in Antwerp*, Bibliotheca Bibliographica Neerlandica Series Maior (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Fernand Donnet, *Les imprimeurs Trognaesius et leur famille* (Antwerp: E. Secelle, 1919).

35 For the gift of the statue see Luc Duerloo and Marc Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel: het Jeruzalem van de Lage Landen* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2002), 55.

36 Marinus, "Kampionen van de contrareformatie, 1562–1773," 20. Among the top early financial contributors was Michael Boot, Cornelia Boot's nephew and Anna Sgrevens's uncle, who had four sons join the Jesuits.

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June 24, 1609, in which the provincial superior Franciscus Florentius granted Maria Houtappel permission to participate in 'all the merits, devotions, masses, penances, sermons, confessions, and all the other good works and religious offices that are performed and shall be performed henceforth by all the company and religious of this house [i.e., the Antwerp Jesuits] wherever in the world they may be.'[37] On November 27 of 1611 the superior general in Rome, Claudio Aquaviva, wrote a letter to Cornelia Boot, her four daughters, and Anna Sgrevens that recognized the society's debt to these women and in turn granted them a list of spiritual benefits similar to those earlier accorded to Maria. A postscript on the letter, signed by Scribani, attests that they all now possessed the right to be buried in the (as yet only planned) church of the Jesuits in Antwerp.[38]

In 1612 the Jesuit *Provincia Belgica* was split into the *Provincia Gallo-Belgica* (Walloon Province) and the *Provincia Flandro-Belgica* or *Diets-Nederlandse* (Flemish Province). The Antwerp Professed House (the Jesuits avoided the term 'monastery' to emphasize their non-enclosed, active missionary lifestyle) became head of the latter, making its prefect Scribani the new provincial superior, a position he retained until 1619. Under his purview plans were made for a new building complex in the heart of the city, which would include residential and administrative buildings and a modestly sized but architecturally grand public square, defined by a church, a library, and a sodality house, all built in a classicist Italian style (see Fig. 8.1). Francois d'Aguilon was appointed architect, and although initial plans sent to the superior general in Rome in 1613 were rejected, a new design was approved in 1615.[39]

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37 "… tous les mérites, prières, messes, pénitences, prédications, confessions et de toutes les autres bonnes oeuvres et offices religieuses qui se font et se feront désormais par toute la Compagnie etles religieux dicelle en quelqe endroit du monde quils soient." State Archive Antwerp, Archief van de Nederduitse provincie der jezuïeten en van het archief van het professenhuis te Antwerpen 1564–1773: 116–544, nr. 1.

38 State Archive Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, Stukken betreffende de schenkingen door de zusters Anna, Christina, en Maria Houtappel en Anna 's Grevens, T14/015.02–185: letter from Aquaviva to the Houtappel women, 27 November, 1611.

39 C. Van Herck and Ad Jansen, "Archief in beeld (2e deel): inventaris van de tekeningen bewaard op het archief van de Caroluskerk te Antwerpen," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis & folklore* 11 (1948): 45–91, 49; Bert Daelemans, "Pieter Huyssens S. J. (1577–1637), an Underestimated Architect and Engineer," in *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands: The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, ed. Piet Lombaerde (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008). On the Low Countries Jesuits' approach to architectural projects more broadly, see Bert Daelemans, "Het Promptuarium Pictorum als spiegel van de ontwerppraktijk der Vlaamse Jezuïetenarchitecten in de 17de eeuw," in *Bellissimi ingegni, grandissimo splendore. Studies over de religieuze architectuur in de*

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On April 15 of that year the first stone of the new church was laid. It was to be built on an open three-aisled plan that recalled early Christian basilicas, without side chapels or an architectural divider or roodscreen to block the laity's view of the masses performed at the its three altars.[40] At first glance this church plan might be seen to embrace and even exceed the emphasis on sobriety and restraint embodied in the Gèsu, the Jesuit mother church in Rome on which it was largely modelled (the rich decoration in the Gèsu today was added mainly in the later seventeenth century). But the Antwerp Jesuits in fact visualized a wholly different kind of space, one whose richness of decoration would outshine every other church in the region. The costs rose quickly, and despite embarking on a fundraising campaign beginning with parish collections in 1614, the Jesuits began borrowing large sums from local wealthy families.[41] Jeffrey Muller has convincingly argued that this 'deficit spending' was a calculated strategy on the part of the community's leaders, who believed (correctly, it would turn out) that investing in grandeur and opulence would both draw the populace in to be educated in the tenets of faith and stimulate pious giving back to the community.[42]

But the Jesuit leadership in Rome was not at all in favor of this approach. In 1617 the Antwerp house's deficit was 21,348 guilders, and the superior general, Muzio Vitelleschi, wrote to Jacobus Tirinus, who had headed the project since his appointment as provost of the new Professed House in 1616, instructing him to moderate his building activities to spend no more than the donations

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Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de 17de eeuw, ed. Krista de Jonge, Annemie De Vos, and Joris Snaet, *Symbola Facultatis Litterarum Lovaniensis* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000).

40 These characteristics respond to the Council of Trent's (1545–1563) emphasis on lay understanding of and participation in church ritual; the implementation of the Tridentine reforms was in turn the goal of the Milan archbishop Carlo Borromeo book on church architecture and decoration, *Instructiones Fabricae Et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae* (1577) in which the author repeatedly looks to early Christian churches as authoritative examples. See Robert Sénécal, "Carlo Borromeo's Instructiones Fabricae Et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae and Its Origins in the Rome of His Time," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68 (2000): 241–267; Marcia B. Hall, *Renovation and Counter-Reformation: Vasari and Duke Cosimo in Sta Maria Novella and Sta Croce 1565–1577* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979); Evelyn Carole Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's *Instructiones fabricate et supellectilis ecclesiasticae*, 1577, Book I, a translation with commentary" (Syracuse University, 1977); Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, "Preaching and Architecture in Tridentine Italy," *Erebea: Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales* 1 (2011): 231–252.

41 The fundraising campaign continued throughout the church's construction, with the largest donations coming from the city, which gave 20,000 guilders in 1616, the archdukes with 12,000 in 1619, and Philip IV with 10,000 in 1622. See Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 210.

42 See Muller, "Jesuit Uses of Art in the Province of Flanders," 132–133.

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that had already been collected.[43] In 1619 the debts were 118,192 guilders and in 1620, 220,000 guilders, at which point the general ordered Tirinus to stop building. The latter ignored the order and not only continued with construction but also expanded the original plans to include two large lateral chapels, which appear on a new plan drawn up by Pieter Huyssens, who had taken over as architect when d'Aguilon died in 1617 (Fig. 8.11). That on the north side would be dedicated to St. Ignatius, that on the south to the Virgin.

In 1621 the Jesuits owed their creditors 460,286 guilders, and in a letter of June 12 Vitelleschi rebuked Tirinius for his disobedience and specifically for having already begun work on the chapel of the Virgin without permission.[44] The church was dedicated the same year with great celebration, and the grand two-story sodality house was constructed from 1622 to 1623.[45] In 1624 provincial superior Florentius de Montmorency reported to Vitelleschi on the progress of the church's decoration, emphasizing its grandeur and listing aspects of the decoration that had been paid for by wealthy benefactors (implicitly arguing against the accusation of irresponsible spending and for the idea that the project's opulence was attracting new donors).[46] He touched on the two lateral chapels and made a point of noting that that of the Virgin was funded by the generosity of the "three daughters of Godfried Houtappel, Maria, Anna, and Christina, along with his descendant Anna Sgrevens."[47] Income from such gifts had not yet caught up to the Jesuits' borrowing, however; the next year the debt peaked at 508,000 guilders and Vitelleschi ordered that both Tirinus and Huyssens be dismissed from the project. Tirinus was replaced as provost of the Professed House by Jan de Tollenare, whom the general superior instructed to repay the Jesuits' creditors as quickly as possible.[48]

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43 For the figures on the debts, Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 210–212.

44 Alfred Poncelet, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas: établissement de la Compagnie de Jésus en Belgique et ses développements jusqu'a la fin du règne d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, vol. 2, 476.

45 Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 210.

46 From the *Litterae annuae Domus Professum Soctis Jesu Antverpia Anni 1624*, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome, as reproduced in Claire Baisier, "De documentaire waarde van de kerkinterieurs van de Antwerpse school in de Spaanse tijd (1585–1713)" (University of Leuven, 2008), 344.

47 *Ad dextrum templi latus excitatum sacellum dicandum magnae Matri longum pedes omnino quinquagenta duos, latum viginti septem* (*alteri quod ex adversa templi parte biennium B. Parenti nostro Ignatio exstructum fuit respondens*) *liberalitate trium filiarum D. Gotofredi Houttapelii Mariae, Annae, Christinae, eiusdemque neptis Anna Sgrevens*. Ibid.

48 Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 211.

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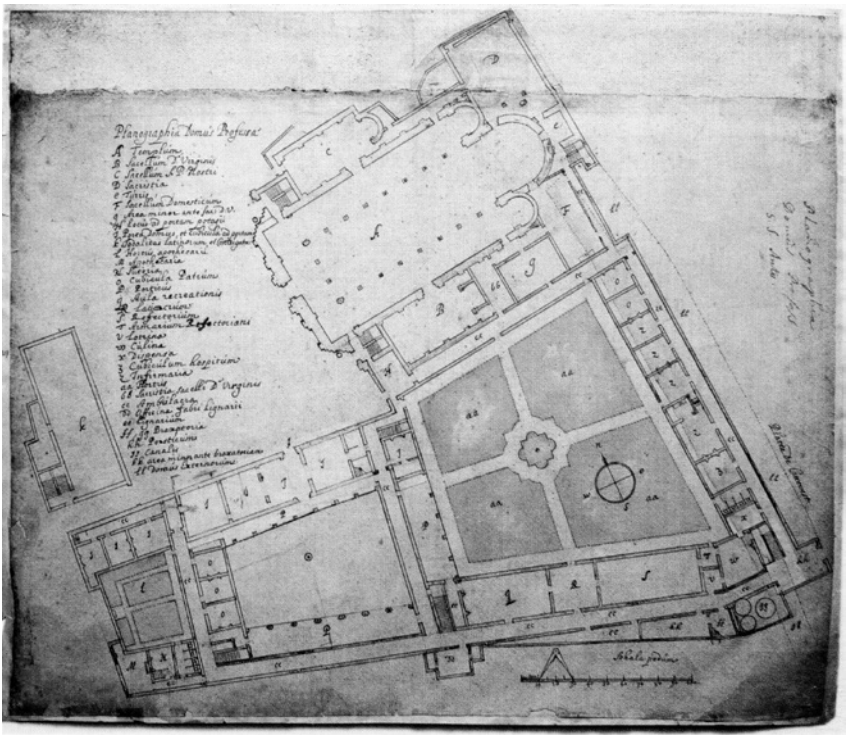

FIGURE 8.11 Pieter Huyssens, plan for the Jesuit complex, c. 1620–1622, Archive of the Carolus Borromeuskerk, Antwerp

3 The Construction and Decoration of the Chapel

It is the context of this conflict and its aftermath that the chapel of the Virgin was created, with construction beginning in 1620 or 1621 and the main phases of decoration stretching until about 1645, with at least one later addition in 1657. Here I will first sketch the chronology of this process and the expenses laid out for it as far as can be gleaned from the documentary evidence. I will then discuss the chapel as an integrated whole in which architecture, sculpture, and painting came together to communicate theological messages.

It is unclear whether the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens were involved in the chapel's initial conception; however, the correspondence of its foundation with the sisters' inheritance from their mother in the fall of 1620 strongly suggests that the latter was the catalyst. We are missing the documents (the parents' marriage contract, Cornelia Boot's will, probate inventories for her half of the marital property and for her personal property) that would tell us the exact size of this fortune, but considering the family's standing and the

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daughters' subsequent patronage acts it was undoubtedly huge. On receiving their inheritance the sisters may have had the idea to build a monumental family chapel in the Jesuit church, or the Jesuits might have seen their faithful supporters' new wealth as an opportunity and brought a proposal for the chapel to them. It could also have been the case that the Jesuits were already planning the project when Cornelia Boot died, and the sisters, seeing the financial pressure under which the fathers were working, saw a chance to step in and make the chapel their own.

In any case, the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens were established as the chapel's patrons by November or December of 1622, when Tirinus wrote that he had allocated or dedicated (*ghegundt*) the space to these women and hung their arms there in recognition of the "many good deeds that they have done for our Society."[49] The fact that the escutcheons could be hung at all implies that the architecture of the chapel was complete at this time, and the 'allocation' also almost certainly corresponds with the establishment of the chapel as the Houtappel family's tomb; the body of Cornelia Boot, if not already in the subterranean crypt, must have been interred around this time as would have been that of her daughter Lucretia.

The architectural plan for the chapel of the Virgin has traditionally been ascribed to Rubens, though Leon Lock has recently argued for a collaborative approach between the painter and Huyssens.[50] Measuring seventeen meters long by seven-and-a-half wide, the chapel is architecturally separate from the rest of the church and accessible through a portal on its northeast corner. The east end is divided into a small rectangular apse just wide enough for the altar frame, which is flanked by two small triforia elevated to the height of the altarpiece. The spaces below these balconies are accessible by small doors, one giving access to the sacristy behind the altar, and the other to a stairway down to the church's crypt and the subterranean mortuary chapel beneath the altar of the chapel of the Virgin. The most striking architectural element

49 "… ick aende Eerbaere Joffrouwen Marie, Anna, Christina Houtappels ende Anna sGrevens, om de menichvuldige weldaden aen onse Societeyt bewesen, ghegundt hebbe de nieuwe Capelle van onse lieve vrouwe van Scherpenheuvel in onse kerke, ende de selve met haere wapenen besedt hebbe." Original quoted in Ramsahoye, "The Chapel of our Lady of Scherpenheuvel in the Church of St. Charles Borromeo, Antwerp," 46. The date of November or December is based on the fact that Tirinus's letter is dated 1622 but he does not include Lucretia, who died on October 31.

50 See Lock, "Rubens and the Sculpture and Marble Decoration," in *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands: The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, ed. Piet Lombaerde (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008).

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of the chapel is its use of a hidden light source in the form of a window set into the wall of a small barrel vault above the altar (Fig. 8.12), which together with the chapel's south-facing lateral windows illuminate the space, making it particularly bright in the afternoon. Paintings like that by Vrancx (see Fig. 8.4) that show the church's interior typically depict the entrance to the chapel of the Virgin as filled with a glowing, almost heavenly light.

Decorative efforts seem first to have been focused around the altar, which along with the altar of the St. Ignatius chapel was dedicated on Pentecost of 1625.[51] The state of the apse was described by Florentius de Montmorency in a report to Vitelleschi of that year, which tells us that the statue of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel had been placed on the altar, as had Rubens's *Assumption* of c. 1611–1614 (Fig. 8.13) (the original was taken to Vienna by the Empress Marie Teresa at the end of the eighteenth century and is now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum; a nineteenth-century copy now appears in its place). This work had originally been executed for the high altar of Antwerp's cathedral but been rejected, and it is not clear exactly when or how it became destined for the chapel.[52]

Also complete were the eight small scenes attributed to Hendrik van Balen that act as a kind of predella, painted directly onto the marble of the altar and the adjacent walls. Referred to by de Montmorency as "various painted emblems of the Nativity and the mysteries of the Word made Flesh," these were possibly executed in 1621, when two payments to the painter appear in

51 'Nobili tamen nostri, inquam, temporis Appellis Petri Pauli Rubbenii caelorum Regina in caelum assumpta altari in proprio sacello imposita, nobilissimam fortasse nobimissime pictoris opus: cui suppedanea eiusdem virginis satis procera statua e sacra Apriscollensi quercu excisa. Aram cingunt ab eodem artifice, eodemque modo quo in sacello B. Parentis nostri depicta varia, emblemata natalitia incarnati verbi mysteria referentia. Ceterum quamvis huic altari nondum suprema manus sit imposita, ex imperfecto tamen opere quale quantumque futurum sit facile colligi potest. Frontalia sane aliaque ornamenta venusta admodum, nec parii pretii mirantur omnes quibus liberalitate filiarum D^{ni} Godefridi Houtappelii, Mariae, Annae, Christinae, eiusdemque neptis D. Annae Sgrevens magna sit quotidie accessio, quae ad ornandum D. virginis sacellum (quod suo iure sibi vindicant) omnem industriam et omnes curas diurnas nocturnasque conferunt, ut interim omittam quotidiana domui collata beneficia, multa et magna'. Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu, Provincia Flandro-Belgica 52. Hist. (1620–1629). Reproduced in Baisier, "De documentaire waarde van de kerkinterieurs van de Antwerpse school in de Spaanse tijd (1585–1713)," 345.

52 On the painting and related preparatory works, see Freedberg, *Rubens: The Life of Christ after the Passion*, 149–53; Anne-Marie S. Logan, ed. *Peter Paul Rubens: The Drawings* (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2005), 155–61.

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FIGURE 8.12 Hans van Mildert (?), marble figure of God the Father at the top of the altar in the chapel of the Virgin, c. 1625, and the barrel vault above with a hidden window on the south wall, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
PHOTO: AUTHOR

the Jesuit accounts.[53] They are arranged to be read in pairs; moving from the outermost scenes inward we see the Presentation of the Virgin on the left and on the right the Presentation of Christ, then the Virgin of the Annunciation and the Angel of the Annunciation, the Flight into Egypt and the Visitation, and finally the Adoration of the Shepherds and Adoration of the Magi, which flank the statue of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel.

Neither the designer nor the sculptor of the carved altar frame are recorded, but based on stylistic and circumstantial evidence they were probably Rubens and Hans van Mildert. Designs made by the former for other sculptural elements in the church share elements with the altar's florid dynamism, and the latter was responsible for the church's high altar (completed 1621) and later appears to have made a design for a marble altar for the Houtappel-Sgrevens

53 Anna C. Knaap, "Marvels and Marbles in the Antwerp Jesuit Church: Hendrick van Balen's Stone Paintings of the *Life of the Virgin* (1621)," in *Jesuit Image Theory*, ed. Wietse de Boer, Walter S. Melion, and Karl A. E. Enenkel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 364.

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FIGURE 8.13 Peter Paul Rubens, *Assumption of the Virgin*, c. 1611–1614, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

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family crypt (Fig. 8.14).[54] According to de Montmorency the chapel altar was in 1625 as yet "imperfect," but this, he assured Vitelleschi, would easily be rectified through the generosity of the community's donors.[55] The Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens, he stated, had already made "many and great" gifts towards the chapel of the Virgin, and would continue to show all "industry and care," working "day and night" to see to its ornamentation. As this work continued over the coming years, such 'gifts' would include rich liturgical vessels, vestments, and decorative elements for the altars, one of which is described in 1628 by de Montmorency's successor Jacobus Stratius as an expensive altar frontal made of cloth of silver with *insigni acus artificio illuso*, "striking illusionistic needle work."

That same letter refers to the chapel as that of the "queen of heaven," *sacello praesertim coelorum reginae*, instead of *sacello magnae Matri* – chapel of the great Mother [of God] – as earlier documents term it. This we can link to the then near-complete altar space and its iconography: viewers saw in Rubens's altarpiece the Virgin miraculously born up to heaven by a flock of angels three days after her death, while the apostles and bystanders marveled at her empty tomb below; the image was narratively expanded by the marble figure of God at the top of the altar (see Fig. 8.13) who reaches down to place a gilded crown (now removed) onto Mary's head as she rises. De Montmorency's reference to heaven also suggests that the stucco ceiling had already been completed or at least that its plans had been finalized. A design for the ceiling attributed to Rubens is preserved in the Albertina, while its execution has been attributed to Andries Colyns de Nole, who would a few years later be involved in other decorative work for the chapel (see below). The ceiling features symbols of the Virgin set into a heavenly space with angels, and it was on view by the Feast of the Nativity (September 8) of 1631 when the Archduchess Isabella and Marie

54 For Rubens, see Valerie, Herremans, "Peter Paul Rubens and the Decoration of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp"; the drawing for the crypt chapel bears an eighteenth-century inscription giving the attribution to Van Mildert, the date, and a statement that the design was for the 'improvement' – presumably replacement – of an existing altar. See Marinus, "Kampionen van de contrareformatie, 1562–1773," 45.

55 Baisier, "De documentaire waarde van de kerkinterieurs van de Antwerpse school in de Spaanse tijd (1585–1713)," 345. The letter from de Montmorency provides the only solid evidence thus far for dating the altar. As it has only recently been published, several previous authors, including Bert Timmermans, Marguerite Casteels, and Valerie Herremans have presumed that the altar was completed later, after 1626 and as late as 1640, and some have claimed authorship for the Colyns de Nole workshop based on the 1635 contract for work on the chapel discussed below. Timmermans's statement that the marble for the altar cost 3000 guilders (*Patronen van patronage …*, 221) appears to be based on a misinterpretation of documents of 1640 cited by Casteels.

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FIGURE 8.14 Hans van Mildert (attr.), design for the altar in the subterranean crypt of the chapel of the Virgin, 1635, Archive of the Carolus Borromeuskerk, Antwerp

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de' Medici visited the church. In a description of their visit published the following year Jean Puget de La Serre noted that the ceiling was "carved in relief with figures, but so boldly that the work seems to detach from the [ceiling], deceiving the spirit with the eyes" – plastic illusionism in this case was clearly valued by the author and presumably by contemporaries. De La Serre however mistakenly stated that the carvings were done in "white stone," probably indicating that the stucco had not yet been gilded as we see it today (see Fig. 8.15).[56]

On March 13 of 1635 the three Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens contracted with Robrecht Colyns de Nole and his nephew Andries to "clothe" (*becleeden*) the chapel in marble.[57] The cost for the project was to be 21,000 guilders paid in installments, with Anna Sgrevens covering one-half of the amount and the Houtappels the other half. While Rubens is presumed to have designed the installation, the contract makes reference only to a (now lost?) drawing "delivered and signed" by a certain Jesuit named Joannes Van Dam, which is described as marked with letters denoting where each different type of stone was to be used: marble of black, red, and white, as well as "variegated [i.e. polychrome] Italian marbles, whether black and yellow, or green-white, or whatever sorts are available." The women further ordered "six figures in white Carrara marble, each six feet high, being Our Lady with the Christ Child, St. Joseph, St. Joachim, St. Anna, St. Christina, [and] St. Lucretia or Susanna." The result, visible today, is a richly decorated interior whose aesthetic effects depend on not only the stones' natural colors but also deeply carved relief elements in the form of scrollwork, foliage, putti, and antique masks. The contract stipulated that the work was to be completed in three and a half years, but the death of Robrecht in 1636 and of Andries in 1638 must have contributed to

56 Jean Puget de La Serre, *Histoire curieuse de tout ce qui c'est* (*sic*) *passé à l'entrée de la Reyne Mere du Roy Treschrestien dans les villes des Pays Bas* (Antwerp: Balthasar Moretus, 1632), 57. "Sur le milieu de l'Eglise il y a aussi deux autres Chappelles, placees hors des espaces de son estenteduë; l'une consacrée à la Vierge, & l'autre à sainct Ignace. Les voutes sont de pierre blanche, taillée en figures de relief; mais si hardiment, que l'ouvrage se destache en apparence de luy mesme, pour decevoir les esprits par les yeux. Les deux autels sont enrichis des despoüilles de quelque fameuse carriere de marbre, dont la politesse efclatante fait admirer par force les appas de sa beauté insensible & inanimée."

57 The document is reproduced in Pieter Jozef Visschers, *Iets over Jacob Jonghelinck, metaelgieter en penningsnyder, Octavio van Veen, schilder, in de XVI^e^ eeuw; en de gebroeders Collyns de Nole, beeldhouwers, in de XV^e^, XVI^e^ en XVII^e^ eeuw* (Antwerp, 1853), 94–97. On the de Nole family of sculptors, see Marguerite Casteels, *De beeldhouwers de Nole te Kamerijk, te Utrecht en te Antwerpen*, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schone kunsten van België. Klasse der schone kunsten (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1961); Jan Van der Stock and Hans Nieuwdorp, "Het Christusbeeld van de Meir te Antwerpen. Een meesterwerk van de gebroeders De Nole uit de vergeethoek," *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art* 55 (1986).

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FIGURE 8.15 Ceiling with gilt stucco decoration, attributed to Andries de Nole, c. 1631, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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delays that stretched the installation of the marble until at least the middle of the following decade.[58]

On May 12, 1638, Anna Sgrevens wrote her will, naming the Houtappel sisters as her executors and stating that "in the case that I should owe any debts for the affixing of the marble in Our Dear Lady chapel in the Professed House, and also for the gilding of the chapel, and the paintings that should be there, and any other work towards its completion" the sisters should pay the costs from her estate, most of which she left to the Jesuits.[59] Anna did die later that year, and over the next six years the Houtappel sisters made numerous payments, totaling 16,729 guilders, from her estate towards the chapel. These were tallied in an account drawn up by the procurator of the Jesuit College Gaspar de Haze on August 13 of 1644.[60] On September 12 of 1639 the commission was transferred to the sculptors Jacques Couplet and Sebastiaan de Neve, who had worked as journeymen under Andries Colyns de Nole.[61] At that point the two artists still needed "three pieces of white marble" – suggesting that work on at least three of the statues had not yet been started. In 1640 the Couplet-de Neve workshop recorded a payment for renting the workshop where "three figures" had already been completed.[62] Marguerite Casteels speculates that these were the statues of Joseph and the Virgin (Figs. 8.16 and 8.17), which she attributes to the Colyns de Noles, with possibly finishing touches by Couplet and de Neve) and St. Susanna (Fig. 8.18, which she attributes fully to de Neve) since no subsequent archival traces for those figures have been found.

In 1642 a payment was entered for the installation of the figure of St. Anne (Fig. 8.19), and a letter from the provincial superior to Vitelleschi in that year indeed states that that statue had been erected in the chapel.[63] The same let-

58 On the progress of the project see See Casteels, *De beeldhouwers de Nole te Kamerijk, te Utrecht en te Antwerpen*, 404–419.

59 State Archive Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, T14/015.02–185: Will of Anna Sgrevens, May 12, 1638; see also the probate inventory of Sgrevens's estate made on October 31, 1638.

60 State Archive Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, T14/015.02–185: Accounting of payments made by the Houtappel sisters from Anna Sgrevens's estate, made on August 13, 1644.

61 Delays may have also been caused by conflicts between the sculptors and Andries de Nole's widow, from whom Couplet and de Neve briefly rented their former employer's workshop. See Casteels, *De beeldhouwers de Nole te Kamerijk, te Utrecht en te Antwerpen*, 135–136.

62 Ibid., 417–419; Léon Lock ("Flemish Sculpture: Art and Manufacture 1600–1750," University of London, 2008), has noted that a terracotta model for the figure of St. Joseph is held in the collection of the Royal Museum in Brussels.

63 State Archive Antwerpen, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, T14/015.02–185: Accounting of payments made by the Houtappel sisters from Anna Sgrevens's

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ter reports that figures of Peter and Paul had already been installed in the balustraded triforia flanking the altar; these were not part of the 1635 contract with the Colyns de Noles and must have been ordered separately. Based on stylistic evidence Casteels attributed them to the Colyns de Noles for the design and primarily to Jacques Couplet for the execution; however the attribution is complicated by the fact that the figures now in place appear to be copies (they are not marble but painted wood, Figs. 8.20, 8.21). Because the statue of St. Peter, in the left-hand triforium as one faces the altar, is swathed in shadow no matter the time of day, one wonders if there may have originally been an opening in the wall beside him that would have allowed him to be illuminated with light from the nave.

Among the last entries in the account for Anna Sgrevens's estate are a payment of 500 guilders on June 2, 1644, to Sebastiaan de Neve for completing the statue of St. Catherine (Fig. 8.22; Catherine had replaced the statue of Joachim at some point after the original contract was drawn up), and finally a note stating that another 400 guilders, representing Sgrevens's half of the cost of the statue of St. Christina (Fig. 8.23), would be paid to the artist when it was finished.[64] When their installation was complete these eight sculpted figures would have made a striking impression on the viewer, both in a spiritual sense – the life-sized figures peering down from their elevated but still accessible register on the walls would have heightened the illusion of sharing their heavenly space – and a material one, since the Carrara marble from which they were made was very expensive in the seventeenth-century Low Countries and underlined the financial power of the patrons.[65]

The "paintings" mentioned by Anna Sgrevens in her will of 1638 probably referred to the several works, all depicting Marian themes, that were custom-sized to fit between the marble elements on the walls. No other contemporary documents concerning these images have come to light, but Daniel Papebroeck's description of the chapel from around 1700 allows us to identify them for the most part.[66] Still in its original location at the back of the chapel, beneath the

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estate, made on August 13, 1644; for the letter, Baisier, "De documentaire waarde van de kerkinterieurs van de Antwerpse school in de Spaanse tijd (1585–1713)," 347.

64 State Archive Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, T14/015.02–185: Accounting of payments made by the Houtappel sisters from Anna Sgrevens's estate, made on August 13, 1644.

65 On the cost of various types of marble see Lock, "Flemish Sculpture: Art and Manufacture 1600–1750," Chapter 4.

66 'Exhinc singulariter venerantium illam assiduitas crevit: multos etiam e longinquo attrahebat fama speciosioris quam alibi uspiam exstat capellae, quam novam videri faciebat marmoreal incrustatio parietis, inter positas recenter picturas praestantium artificum: quarum duae, sub gemina ad latus meridionale fenestra (nam sub media

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FIGURE 8.16 Robrecht and Andries Colyns de Nole (attr.), *Virgin and Child*, c. 1638, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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FIGURE 8.17 Robrecht and Andries Colyns de Nole (attr.), *St. Joseph*, c. 1638, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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FIGURE 8.18 Sebastiaan de Neve (attr.), *St. Susanna*, c. 1638–1640, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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FIGURE 8.19 Jacques Couplet (attr.), *St. Anne*, 1640–1642, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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FIGURE 8.20 Anon., *St. Peter*, undated wooden copy after a marble original by Robrecht and Andries Colyns de Noles and Jacques Couplet (attr.) completed by 1642, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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FIGURE 8.21 Anon., *St. Paul*, undated wooden copy after a marble original by Robrecht and Andries Colyns de Noles and Jacques Couplet (attr.) completed by 1642, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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FIGURE 8.22 Sebastiaan de Neve, *St. Catharine*, 1644, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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FIGURE 8.23 Sebastiaan de Neve, *St. Christina*, c. 1644–45, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
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Houtappel coat of arms and between decorative profile portraits of Christ and the Virgin in white marble, is Cornelis Schut's *Circumcision* (Fig. 8.24), an unusual composition that removes the scene from its typical temple setting to an ambiguous, perhaps heavenly or timeless, space. The Virgin holds her son in her lap, while the priest (whom Papenbroeck mistook for St. Joseph) kneels at her feet; two angels assist with the procedure while others floating above bear symbols of Christ's Passion, which is prefigured by the sacrifice of blood in the circumcision.

The two paintings originally on the south wall, hung on either side of the confessional, are works by Gerard Seghers now in the Antwerp Royal Museum of Fine Arts (Fig. 8.25) and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Fig. 8.26), both of which display unusual iconography centered around the Virgin. The Antwerp picture presents the viewer with the biblical episode in which the resurrected Christ (recognizable as such by his palm frond and wounds) greets his mother. Mary is depicted as having just been interrupted in prayer, kneeling before a table-like altar with the signs of the Passion around her; above two putti hold a banner with the words *Regina coeli, laetare, alleluia*: "Queen of heaven, rejoice" – even though Mary was, of course, at this narrative moment still very much alive and on earth. Christ, on the other side, has just returned from hell/limbo and trails behind him Old Testament figures that he has released: King David, Moses, and Adam and Eve. Curiously, also in the group are

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sedes stat confessionalis) Gerardi Zegerii sunt: una redivivum a mortuis Christum cum Patriarchis, limbo eductis, exhibens moestae, contemplandisque Passionis instrumentis intentae Matri; altera, eadem de manu Ioannis sacrificantis communicantem, in consortio Evangelicarum mulierum. E regione altaris, inter corniciam et confessionale, decurrit longior tabula Schutti, exprimens circumcisionis mysterium peractum reverenter a Iosepho genuflexo ante genua Virginis, tenentis in gremio filiolum, ad crucem desuper oblatam ab Angelis brachiola tendentem. Ex adverso autem fenestrae mediae, supra tertium confessionale, est duodennis Iesus a parentibus Hierosolymam ductus, Livinaei opus. Prae ceteris tamen admirationi est maior tabula, in qua depictam a Rubenio cum parvulo Matrem Chorus Angelorum, desuper ab eodem Rubenio expressus, ornate sertis et pancarpiis florum, a Daniele Zegers quam vivacissime expressorum. Ad pilas quatuor, sustinendo fornici circumductas, totidem grandes ex candido marmore statuae assurgunt, Sanctarum Annae, Christinae, Susannae et Catharinae. Denique supra portulam utramque ad sacrarium unam, alteram ad hypogeum sepulcrale ducentem, assistunt hinc Deipara, inde Iosephus, marmorei ambo; et post hos in lateralibus podiis altare stipant Apostolorum Principes Petrus ac Paulus. Altari vero ipsi superne incumbit, inter marmoreaos Angelos, marmoreus ipse Deus Pater, quasi coronam aeris inaurati tendens ascendenti, in iam dicta tabula, e tumulo coelorum Reginae imponendam.' Papenbroeck, Buschmann, and Mertens, *Annales antverpienses ab urbe condita: ad annum MDCC collecti ex ipsius civitatis monementis publicis privatisque latinae ac patriae linguae iisque fere manu exaratis*, 407–08.

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FIGURE 8.24 Cornelis Schut, *Circumcision*, c. 1640s, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
PHOTO: AUTHOR

St. Joseph and two anonymous souls, apparently signifying that Christ's sacrifice has made possible the salvation of all those who come after him. Seghers has thus created another hybrid heavenly/earthly space that glorifies Mary while underlining the crucifixion of her son as the foundation for mankind's salvation.

The Vienna painting depicts an apocryphal scene, that of St. John the Evangelist administering communion to Mary. The subject is unusual and has not, to my knowledge, been examined by art historians. It constitutes a curious kind of reintegration of the body of Christ into that of Mary, herself the site of his incarnation. It seems to have gained limited popularity after Trent, and the extant examples I have been able to trace suggest that it was a particularly Spanish iconography that was disseminated into its Low Countries territories in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.[67]

67 On the iconography, see John B. Knipping, *De iconografie van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*. Vol. 2 (Hilversum: 1940), 17. Painted examples include one by Spanish court painter Juan Pantoja de la Cruz of c. 1600 which includes portraits of the family of Archduke Charles II in the Descalzas Reales monastery in Madrid, one by Alonzo Cano in the Museo Nacional de San Carlos, Mexico, another by Miguel Barroso dated 1585–89 in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, an anonymous Flemish seventeenth-century work in the collection of Fyvie castle, Scotland, one attributed to Frans Francken II in the former chapel of the Augustinian hospital sisters (now part of the Elzenveld) in Antwerp (KIK/IRPA nr. 109553), and an anonymous seventeenth-century painting in the Flemish abbey of Westmalle (KIK/IRPA nr. 87138).

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FIGURE 8.25 Gerard Seghers, *Christ Returning from Purgatory to Greet his Mother*, c. 1640s, Royal Museum of Fine Art, Antwerp

FIGURE 8.26 Gerard Seghers, *John the Evangelist Administering Communion to the Virgin Mary Accompanied by Three Women*, c. 1640s, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

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Above the confessional on the north wall Papenbroeck noted a *Return from Egypt* by 'Livinius' (Jan Lievens, a Dutch painter active in Antwerp from 1635 to 1643). The work currently in place there is a *Holy Family with St. John, Joachim, and St. Anne*, more reasonably attributed to Schut (visible in Fig. 8.6). This would seem to indicate a replacement of the original painting; however, it may be that Papenbroeck simply misremembered either the work's subject or the actual location of a now-lost *Return from Egypt*. To the left of the north wall confessional is an anonymous painting of the Assumption not mentioned by Papenbroeck, and this may be where the painting he described as "by Rubens, with some ornate wreathes of fruit and flowers which Daniel Seghers painted from life" was originally installed.[68] Finally, at some point the sisters hung the portraits of their parents by Gortzius (8.8 & 8.9) in the chapel. Inscriptions were added naming Cornelia and Godfried as mother and father of Maria, Anna, and Christina, and calling both the parents and the daughters "co-founders" of the Jesuit College.[69] According to Visschers, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, these portraits were hung below the *Holy Family* mentioned above, which would resonate with its theme of parental and filial love.[70]

For the making of the three confessionals we have no documentary evidence, but as the marble decorative panels seem designed to fit around them they must have been planned by the time the 1635 contract was drawn up. Made of oak, each consists of a central space with a bench for the priest to sit while hearing confessions, divided from two flanking spaces for penitents to kneel by intricately carved panels (Fig. 8.27).

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68 Such pictures constituted an image-within-an-image with a central religious scene (often, but not always, of the Virgin), see David Freedberg, "Origins and rise of the Flemish Madonnas in flower garlands," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 32 (1981): 115–150; Susan Merriam, *Seventeenth-century Flemish garland paintings: Still life, vision, and the devotional image* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

69 Although Katlijne van der Stighelen identified this reference with portraits of the parents by Cornelis Schut that were owned by Anna Houtappel at the time of her death, the inscriptions that were added to the Gortzius pieces indicate that it must have been these pictures in the chapel. It would also make sense that Anna would keep portraits of her parents both in the public chapel and in her private home. The inscriptions have been removed by restorers but were recorded by A. Somov: *Godefridus Havtappel toparcha in Ranst pater mariae Annae et Christinae Fundatricum hujus col. ob 13 jan aet 83 1686* and *Cornelia Boot mater Mariae Annae et Christinae Fundatricum hujus col. Ob 17 sept aet 67 1621. Ermitage Imperial: Catalogue de la Galerie Des Tableaux, Vol. 2: Écoles Néerlandaises Et École Allemande* (St. Petersburg, 1887), 133.

70 Visschers, *Iets over Jacob Jonghelinck, metaelgieter en penningsnyder, Octavio van Veen, schilder, in de XVI^e eeuw; en de gebroeders Collyns de Nole, beeldhouwers, in de XV^e, XVI^e en XVII^e eeuw*, 113.

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FIGURE 8.27 Anon., confessional, c. 1635–44, chapel of the Virgin, Carolus Borromeuskerk (former Jesuit church), Antwerp
PHOTO: AUTHOR

In keeping with the original spirit of the development of confessionals by Tridentine reformers, who sought to bring the rite of confession out of closed rooms (with their potential for impropriety) and into public view, the chapel's examples have no doors or gates on the front.[71] Although their details differ, the decorative schema of the confessionals all prominently feature angel-topped herms on their dividing panels with deeply carved scrollwork, floral patterns,

71 See Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2001).

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putti, and fruit garlands, echoing the same designs on the chapel's altar and throughout its marble decoration on the walls.

In 1657 Anna Houtappel, the last surviving sister (Maria Houtappel had died on February 18 of 1649 and Christina on January 1, 1657) added one final piece of furniture to the chapel's decoration: an ornate white marble communion rail erected before the altar (see Fig. 8.5). In its center is the monogram of the Virgin Mary and on either side are angels whose bodies trail away into cornucopia forms, sprouting leaves and roses. Moving outward these intertwine with Eucharistic symbols: oversized ears of wheat referring to the Host as the body of Christ, and grapes for the wine as his blood. This work formed a sacramental pendant to the chapel's confessionals, as penitents visiting the chapel would first confess and then kneel here to receive the host during the mass.

The chapel of the Virgin in the Jesuit church thus presented its viewers with a remarkably immersive space, one in which every surface was covered in precious materials wrought into visual forms that communicated religious messages. It was in a sense constructed almost like an enormous version of the ornate boxes and cabinets in which wealthy Antwerpers stored precious jewels, antique coins, or religious relics; in this case the "jewel" was the statue of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, and the decoration of the chapel aimed primarily at communicating the glory of the Virgin Mary herself. The imagery had a narrative aspect, beginning at the altar with the tiny 'predella' scenes from the Virgin's earthly life, each story or episode illustrating her personal virtues and her selection by God to be the bearer of Christ. The next vertical register presents us with the penultimate moments in her story, her Assumption and Coronation. Roses and fruit carved in relief on the altar further enhance our understanding of the scene, referring to the Virgin's virtue, to the sweet scent that emerged from her tomb when it was opened after her death, and to the heavenly 'fruits' of her pious life. The light that streams through the window concealed above God also seems to come from heaven itself, almost as though by a miracle – an idea that would in turn support Counter-Reformation church's claims for Mary's power as intercessor and the truth of miracles wrought through her compassion.[72] This thematic integration of painting,

72 In fact, the author of the report on the visit of Marie d'Medici and the archduchess Isabella to the Jesuit church states that they listened to a sermon on just that subject by a certain Father Souffran, which brought the audience to tears: "Ce fut en ce sainct lieu qu le R. Pere Souffran preschant en presence de la Reyne & de l'Infante, & devant un monde de people, le jour de la Nativité de la Vierge, fit des miracles a son ordinaire. Ie dy, des miracles, puis que par le seul effort de sa voix, animée de charité, il fit sourdre mille ruisseaux de larmes d'autant de coeurs de roche. Le ne vous en diray pas davantage, pour vous laisser la meditation de cette importante verité." Jean Puget de La Serre, *Histoire curieuse*

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sculpture, and architecture would become a hallmark of baroque art and was employed most famously by Bernini in the 1640s, which makes its appearance here in the Antwerp Jesuit church by 1625 particularly notable.[73]

The ceiling then represents, in symbolic form, Mary's eternal reign in heaven. At its center is her monogram MRA (Maria Regina Ave) inside a sunburst, which would have formally echoed the crown held by God the Father on the altar. A star and a moon appear on either side as references to the *Song of Solomon*. Above the windows on the south side of the chapel angels hold a vase, a typical symbol of Mary's virginity, and a 'spotless' mirror, symbol of the Immaculate Conception (Wisdom 7:26). The angels at the west end of the ceiling bear musical instruments, a sign of the heavenly music played on the occasion of the Assumption, and flowers. Those at the east hold laurel wreaths, symbol of valor and triumph, and martyrs' palm fronds. This latter element is curious, as it diverges from an iconographical program in the ceiling that is otherwise completely Marian (Mary was, of course, not executed as a martyr). The palm fronds do, however, resonate with the statues of the three early Christian virgin martyrs – Christina, Susanna, and Catherine of Alexandria – that our 'spiritual daughters' commissioned to adorn the walls below, integrating the primary Marian theme into a secondary theme, that of the spiritual virtue of (female) voluntary celibacy more broadly, discussed further below.

The imagery of the chapel thus surrounded viewers with a sense of Mary's virtue and heavenly presence, while the illusionism of many of its decorative elements would have made it seem as though one had stepped into another realm, a spiritual space removed from the ordinary world. Many visitors would have come specifically to pray before the statue of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, hoping for a miracle that would better their own lives or those of loved ones, and their physical surroundings would have shored up their faith in her virtue, benevolence, and power. Others came to participate in the sacraments of confession and communion, themes that were emphasized not only through the confessionals and the communion rail themselves, but also in both of Gerard Seghers's paintings and in Schut's *Circumcision*, with their direct and indirect references to Christ's sacrifice. One might even speculate that this chapel played an important part in the Jesuits' highly successful

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de tout ce qui c'est (*sic*) *passé à l'entrée de la Reyne Mere du Roy tres chrestien dans les villes des Pays Bas*, 57.

73 On Bernini see Irving Lavin, *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts*, Franklin Jasper Walls lectures (New York Oxford University Press, 1980). While credit for the hidden light source has often been given to Rubens, Leon Lock has suggested that it was Pieter Huyssens who brought the idea back from Rome. Lock, "Rubens and the Sculpture and Marble Decoration," 166.

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and fundamentally Tridentine push to involve the Antwerp laity in just these rituals; in 1649 alone, for example, they passed out around 300,000 consecrated hosts, well over 4 per resident of the city.[74] Finally, both the architecture and the decoration of the chapel made numerous references to Rome as the seat of Catholicism, and to the Catholic Church (rather than the Protestant sects) as the true heir of Christ's teaching: from the employment of the classical orders, barrel vaulting, and arched portico altar, to the use of multicolored marble that echoed contemporary baroque churches in the eternal city, to the figures of saints Peter and Paul as founders of the Church and symbols of the (Catholic) Church militant. The inclusion of these last figures must be rooted in the Jesuits' emphasis on these apostles as their own forbearers in spreading the true faith, and they mirrored very similar statues of Peter and Paul that appeared on the church's façade.[75] In the context of confessional warfare, the chapel of the Virgin thus both acted as a vehicle to increase Antwerp citizens' engagement with orthodox religious practice and grounded right belief within the Tridentine Roman Church.

4 Patronage, Gender, and Agency

The Houtappel sisters' and Anna Sgrevens's support for the Antwerp Jesuits went far beyond patronizing the chapel of the Virgin to include periodic gifts of cash, real estate, and annuities. By the time Anna Houtappel died in 1674 the four women had donated well over 304,000 guilders, not including gifts in kind, as well as made over 66,000 guilders in loans to the community[76] – for perspective, a skilled laborer in Antwerp during this period could expect to make about 240–250 guilders per year.[77] This made them the biggest donors to the Antwerp Jesuits in the seventeenth century. But while the scale of

74 See Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585–1676): kerkelijk leven in een grootstad*, 208 (table 19); Muller, "Jesuit Uses of Art in the Province of Flanders," 139.

75 On the façade and its forcefully Tridentine iconography, see Barbara Haeger, "The Facade of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp: Representing the Church Militant and Triumphant," in *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands: The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, ed. Piet Lombaerde (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008), 97–124.

76 The figure of 304,000 guilders was calculated by Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen: Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld*, 180. Documents in the State Archive Antwerp (T14/015.02–185) allow for the tallying of loans.

77 For wages, see Robert C. Allen, "The Great Divergence in European Wages and Prices from the Middle Ages to the First World War," *Explorations in Economic History* 38, no. 4 (2001): 411–447, 416.

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these women's beneficence was exceptional, their profile as wealthy spiritual daughters among the community's patrons was not. The Ignatius chapel was built by the spiritual daughter Anna Mechelmens, and we find many more such women among their top donors, including the sisters Anna, Maria, and Barbara Goubau, Anna and Elizabeth Haecx, five daughters of the della Faille family, and Anna van Etten.[78] Single women and widows furthermore held over one third of the debts incurred by the Professed House in this period.[79]

The Jesuits in fact seem to have systematically recruited wealthy Flemish women to become spiritual daughters and ultimately patrons. They were criticized for this practice by contemporaries, who not only accused the Jesuits of going after individual women's fortunes but also pointed out that when multiple members of the same family professed as spiritual daughters (thus remaining unmarried and childless) they tended to pass their inheritances down to each other until finally the family fortune landed in Jesuit hands.[80] This is, indeed, exactly what happened with the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens. Much research remains to be done, but there is reason to suspect that a significant portion of Jesuit art and architecture in the Low Countries was funded by spiritual daughters, and this would further resonate with recent scholarship on Italy and France that argues for the Jesuits intentionally targeting wealthy women as patrons.[81] The more we know about these relationships,

78 Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen: Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld*, 141.

79 Ibid., 136, 41–43.

80 Marinus, "Kampionen van de contrareformatie, 1562–1773," 44. Similar accusations were brought against the Jesuits broadly by their critics, in particular in the circulation from 1614 onward of the *Monita secreta*, a forged set of instructions supposedly by the superior general in Rome that outlined Jesuit recruiting tactics and financial strategy. See Pierre-Antoine Fabre et Catherine Maire, ed. *Les antijésuites. Discours, figures et lieux de l'antijésuitisme à l'époque moderne* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010). We can also detect an echo of this criticism in the 1663 report of the English Protestant Phillip Skippon, who wrote of visiting the church: "Here is a little chapel-vault where one Houtappel and others of his family are buried. This person left to this college 400,000 *l.* At this altar, two or three times in a year, masses are said for their souls. They were great benefactors, having built the chapel, &c. The jesuits expect much at the death of one of his daughters." See "A Journey through Part of the Low-Countries, Germany, Italy and France. (1663)," in *A collection of voyages and travels, some now first printed from original manuscripts, others now first published in English. To which is prefixed, an introductory discourse* (*supposed to be written by the celebrated Mr. Locke*) *intitled, The whole history of navigation from its original to this time*, ed. Awnsham Churchill (London: H. Lintot 1745), 380.

81 M. A. Conelli, "A Typical Patron of Extraordinary Means: Isabella Feltria della Rovere and the Society of Jesus," *Renaissance Studies* 18 (2004): 412–436; Olwen Hufton, "Altruism and Reciprocity: The Early Jesuits and their Female Patrons," ibid.15, no. 3 (2001):

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the better we can understand how the Jesuits operated on a global scale, and perhaps even how the Tridentine Church itself understood the challenges to and solutions for its religious missions.

But at the same time the archival documents related to the chapel of the Virgin in the Antwerp Jesuit church show that the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens were not just passive carriers of wealth, obediently providing funds for the Jesuits' projects. The sisters' surviving wills make clear that they aimed to provide for each other first and the Jesuits second, and in some cases they were careful to outline restrictions on the purposes to which the Jesuits could use their donations.[82] That the simple fact of their affluence gave these women a significant degree of agency in their relationship with the Jesuit fathers is further demonstrated by events surrounding the 1629 death of Scribani.[83] The Houtappels and Anna Sgrevens successfully requested that Scribani be buried in their family crypt despite the fact that the Jesuit statutes prohibited such burials for their members. The women interred their spiritual father next to their parents and had a very lengthy, and very laudatory, epitaph inscribed in bronze and installed over his grave.[84] On June 8 of 1630 Vitelleschi wrote to Stratius, then serving as provincial, expressing his shock that such a thing had been allowed to happen and ordering Stratius to implore the Houtappel sisters to remove the epitaph, as it represented an affront to the Jesuit ideal of humility. The inscription was not removed, which may have suited the Antwerp Jesuits just fine, but what is most significant for our purposes is that

328–353; Susan Broomhall, "Devoted Politics: Jesuits and Elite Catholic Women at the Later Sixteenth-Century Valois Court," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 2 (2015): 586–605.

82 See for example State Archive Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, T14/015.02–185: Maria Houtappel's will of 12 May, 1638, in which she wills much of her property to the Jesuits but ensures that her sisters first have use of it (i.e. receive its investment income) until their deaths, and the *Fundatium Houtappel-Sgrevens*, est. 1651.

83 For the following, see Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 510–15, with the epitaph reproduced on 13.

84 It read: 'D.O.M Aeternae memoriae incomparabilis viri R. P. Caroli Scribani S. I. quem Bruxella mundo, Antverpia caelo dedit; postquam pontifici max. caesari, regibus, principibus plurimis domi forisque carus. Hereticis stylo terribilis, bonis omnibus amabilis, animi magnitudine, constantia, iudicio, consilio, linguarum peritia, rerum usu; nulli secundus, Europam totam fama sui nominis luculenter implesset: dissidia nobilium familiarum mille controversiarum arbiter, privatae pacis vindex, publicae studiosus feliciter compossuisset: Societatem Iesu in Belgio per annos XXVIII qua provincialis, qua rector mire promovisset, prudentia, morum gravitate, vitae integritate, religione in deum, pietate in patriam conspicuus laudabiliter vixit annos LXIX ex merito amoris, quod licuit optimo patri spirituali lacrymabile mortis et resurrectionis monimentum Domus et Familia Houtappelliorum praeter votum posuit anno reparatae salutis M.DC.XXIX Iunii die XXIV. Bene precarre mortuo lector brevi moriture.'

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Vitelleschi assumed that the Houtappel sisters were in charge of the space and that no changes could be made without their permission.

Around the same time we find another indication of the position of our female patrons vis-à-vis the Jesuit fathers, in the 1631 second edition of the Dutch translation of the writings of the Milanese spiritual daughter Isabella Christina Bellinzaga (1551–1624).[85] Its rather lengthy dedication to the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens by the Antwerp Jesuit father Gregorius Fabri is adulatory almost to the point of being obsequious: the priest states that he offers this "simple" gift to the "most honorable and pious Ladies" not because they need to learn from it, but as a "means of support or maintenance" of the virtues that they have already acquired.[86] This suggests that as our four female patrons were in the process of completing the chapel of the Virgin, the Antwerp Jesuits had come to position themselves less as their directors and more as the grateful recipients of their largesse.

While the exact dynamics of the relationship between the Jesuits and the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens will remain unknown, it is clear that these women were actively engaged in the process of building the chapel, and that they were in a position to have a significant impact on its appearance. Whereas the overall decorative scheme of the chapel, with its complex expression of Marian and sacramental themes, is certainly rooted in Jesuit teachings, these themes would also have been very well-known to the female patrons who may well have been quite engaged with the design process. At the very least, the life-sized marble statues commissioned to adorn the walls must be the result of input from the Houtappels and Sgrevens. Three of these figures were, of course, of their own patron saints: the Virgin Mary for Maria Houtappel,

85 Isabella Cristina Bellinzaga, trans. H. G. Santfort, *Den kortsten wech tot de hoochste volmaecktheyt met alderley schoone, hooghe ende gheestelijcke leeringhen beset, om naer de selve godtvruchtichlijck te trachten* (Antwerp: Gregorius Fabri, 1631). On Bellinzaga's influence on the Italian Jesuits, see Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe not every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

86 "… heuet my oock goedt ghedocht Eerbaere ende Godtvruchtighe Iouffrauwen uwe eerbare ende Godtvruchtighe maeghdlijckheden dit simpel (nochtans lof ende prijsweerdich werck, arbeydt ende schrijvens, eender teere Italiaensche maghet, toe te voeghen, offeren ende presenteren; niet dat ick achte dat uwe Eerbaerheden, dit als exeplaer oft voorsteeltsel om naer te volghen van doen zijn hebbende: maer stelle die uwe EE. voor, alleen als tot een steunsel oft onderhoudinghe van't ghene uwe eerbare redelijckheden alreede (soo het schijnt) soo seer hebben aengenomen, als oft de redelijckheydt, eerbaerheyt ende Godtvruchticheydt, haer lieder naturelijck waer ingheboren." Bellinzaga, *Den kortsten wech tot de hoochste volmaecktheyt met alderley schoone, hooghe ende gheestelijcke leeringhen beset, om naer de selve godtvruchtichlijck te trachten*, 4–5.

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St. Anne for Anna Sgrevens and Anna Houtappel, St. Christina for Christina Houtappel, and St. Susanna for the deceased Lucretia Susana Houtappel. Both of the latter saints were fairly minor early Christian virgin martyrs, not a topic of particular interest to the early modern Jesuits but one which would have resonated very strongly with our patrons whose voluntary religious chastity was at the very core of their identity. The replacement of St. Joachim in the earlier plan, where he would have stood as a patriarchal pendant to St. Anne, with St. Catherine of Alexandria surely must also be understood in this vein, but why Catherine in particular was chosen has puzzled scholars.

A clue is in fact found in Antonius Houtappel's will of 1617. He mentions 'mia heredita, Catherina seu Cornelia Autappel, figlia de Igidio Autappel,' or 'my heir, Catherina a.k.a. Cornelia Houtappel, daughter of Egidius Houtappel.' This Egidius (or Gillis) was Godfried's younger brother, who lived in Antwerp and was married to Digna de Smit; their only surviving child was named Cornelia Maria.[87] If the family saw the names Cornelia and Catherine as interchangeable, then they must have understood St. Catherine of Alexandria to be the patron saint of their mother Cornelia Boot (there is a fourth-century Roman saint named Cornelia, but she rarely if ever appeared in Flemish church monuments in this period). By erecting a statue of St. Catherine, therefore, the Houtappel sisters were able to include their mother's patron in the church decoration, and together these life-sized marble statues stood as proxies for all the female family members who would eventually be buried together beneath the altar. Their father, Godfried, would be indirectly represented not by his own patron saint but by St. Joseph, patriarch of the holy family. The visual theme of patron saints also explains, I think, the unusual composition of Gerard Seghers's *John the Evangelist Administering Communion to the Virgin Mary*. Typically early modern versions of this subject include only the Virgin, the Evangelist, and an angel or altar boy as an assistant to the mass, as we see in a print by Antony Wierix (Fig. 8.28). Segher's inclusion of three female observers therefore must indicate that it has additional layers of meaning.[88]

The middle woman, who leans in closest to the Virgin and holds out her arms, is older and fully veiled to show that she is married, while the other two are young and wear both their hair and a modest décolletage uncovered, indicating that they are virgins. The most likely explanation for the inclusion of

87 Gillis Houtappel's and Digna de Smit's epitaph is reproduced in Visschers, *Verzameling van grafschriften, in St. Andries kerk, te Antwerpen*, 24.

88 A lost (?) painting made by Erasmus Quellinus II, known by an engraving by Schelte à Bolswert (Biblioteca Nacional de España, item 2585A), was closely related to and possibly based on the Seghers piece. This is the only other image of the scene I have found that includes the female observers, which suggests that they were an invention by Seghers.

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these figures is that they are the patron saints of our chapel's benefactors: the older woman is St. Anne, the young virgins are Saints Christina and Lucretia or Susanna, and the Virgin Mary fills out the group as the patron of Maria Houtappel.

The Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens thus had a significant impact on the decorative plan of the chapel, making the theme of glorified voluntary chastity a major part of its religious messages. Their commissions on this count also show a need on their part to inscribe the chapel with their own identity, here by proxy in the sculpted and painted bodies of their patron saints. The same need can be perceived in the altar plaque that they had inscribed with their names and those of their parents, as well as in actions taken by Anna Houtappel to ensure that her family's coat of arms would remain displayed in the chapel. The rights to those arms were tied to the seigneury of Ranst, and since Godfried Houtappel had no surviving sons when he died, the seigneury had passed to his eldest daughter Maria Houtappel. Ordinarily such a title and its fiefdoms, which as an exception to Antwerp property and inheritance law were governed by primogeniture, would have been transferred from Maria to her husband, or if she died unmarried (as she indeed planned to) to a surviving male relative. But in 1638 she successfully petitioned the Spanish crown for permission to sell the seigneury. In the same year she wrote a will stating that the proceeds from the sale should be divided between her sisters Anna and Christina when she died, and only after their deaths be passed to the Jesuits.[89] In 1642 Maria sold the castle and its lands to her cousin Cornelia Maria Houtappel, mentioned above, making Cornelia and her husband Peter Pascal de Decker the new lady and lord of Ranst.[90] While this was clearly financially beneficial to the Houtappel sisters it also meant that they no longer had the right to use the coat of arms, so in 1669, at the age of 89, Anna Houtappel requested and received permission from the Spanish king Charles II to keep the escutcheon in the chapel of the Virgin on the grounds that her father had still held the lordship when he died.[91]

Making their identity known to the chapel's visitors would have had both social and religious functions for the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens.

89 State Archive, Antwerp, College en convict van de Jezuïeten te Antwerpen, T14/015.02–185: edict from Philip IV granting Maria Houtappel permission to sell the seigneury and fiefdoms, 12 April 1638, and will of Maria Houtappel, 12 May 1638.

90 On the sale see de Decker, "La famille anversoise des Houtappel," 344.

91 The act was signed in Madrid on February 26, 1669, and applied specifically to the marble coat of arms hung in the chapel. See de Decker, "La famille anversoise des Houtappel," 344; Anonymous (M. D. and S. D. H.), *Nobiliaire des Pays-Bas et du comté de Bourgogne* (Leuven: Jean Jacobs, 1760), 449.

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FIGURE 8.28 Antony Wierix, *John the Evangelist Administering Communion to the Virgin Mary*, late sixteenth/early seventeenth century. British Museum, London

While we know nearly nothing about their daily lives, gendered behavioral codes that valued feminine silence and modesty must have girded their public behavior. Through conspicuous consumption within religious patronage, however, they could assert their position at the apex of Antwerp's social elite, and it seems that they did not shy away from displays that some might have found ostentatious – for example, in 1645 Maria Houtappel's 'jubilee' (marking fifty years) as a spiritual daughter was celebrated in the Jesuit church with grand festivities, at which no less than nine separate choirs sang.[92] Keeping

92 Marinus states that ten choirs were present, though Marie Houtappel's epitaph counts nine. Marinus, "Kampionen van de contrareformatie, 1562–1773," 48.

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themselves visible through artistic patronage also offered them crucial spiritual benefits. It would have been the hope and, I think, the expectation of Lucretia Susanna, Christina, Anna, and Maria Houtappel, and Anna Sgrevens, that the magnificence of the chapel of the Virgin and its trumpeting of Catholic doctrine would have made clear their roles as vital contributors to the social and religious fabric of their city, and that this, in turn, would move visitors to pray for their souls in purgatory.

5 Conclusions

The chapel of the Virgin in the Antwerp Jesuit church should be seen as a joint effort between the Jesuits, with their zeal for furthering the cause of reform through dazzling visual displays, and the Houtappel sisters and Anna Sgrevens, without whose enormous wealth and enthusiasm for the project the chapel likely would not have been created. In this sense the findings here build on those put forward in Judith Pollmann's recent (2011) *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520–1635*, in which she argues that the restoration of Catholic culture in the Southern Low Countries was a collaborative process between ecclesiastical reformers and members of the local populace. They also complement other studies of women taking on active roles in the Tridentine reform process across Europe by showing that they could do so outside of both convents and the grass-roots, often service-oriented movements with which we often associate them, by instead using their wealth to create monumental spaces that facilitated the conversion of souls. Considering the amount of property under women's control as well as the popularity of the spiritual daughter movement in the early modern Catholic Low Countries, it is likely that many more such examples will emerge if we simply start to look for them. This could both fundamentally shift our picture of how, and by whom, the region's religious culture was brought to flourish in the seventeenth century, while at the same time pushing us to revisit difficult questions around power, wealth, and gender, especially in terms of what the Counter-Reformation meant for women.

The case of the Houtappels and Anna Sgrevens furthermore asks art and architectural historians to more carefully consider how gendered norms have shaped not only our own historiography but also our primary sources and the very artworks and spaces that we study. As we have seen in the preceding pages, every single known archival and early reference to the construction of the chapel of the Virgin, from account books to letters between the Jesuits

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to the description by Papenbroeck, names only the Houtappel and Sgrevens women as its patrons. Yet numerous authors have credited Godfried Houtappel with its foundation and construction.[93] Their doing so certainly (though not necessarily consciously) arose from, and has perpetuated, a sexist ontological framework in which men are public actors and women are not, but it has also been anchored to two very important and prominent material sources: the subterranean crypt chapel inscription that named Godfried as founder (note 9), and a marble plaque installed before the altar whose Latin inscription translates to 'The monument of Godfried Houtappel, Lord of Ranst, founder of this chapel, and of his most pious wife, Cornelia Boot, and of his virgin daughters, Maria, Anna, Christina, and Lucretia, and his descendant Anna Sgrevens, by whose benefices this chapel to the Mother of God was donated and ornamented, and the College of the Society of Jesus was founded in this city.'[94] Undoubtedly composed by the female patrons, these texts themselves seem to situate Godfried Houtappel as the chapel's main patron.

So does this mean that he actually did found the chapel, donating funds and giving instructions for its building before he died, and that all references to these acts have simply been lost to time? This seems to me all but impossible, as such a gift would not simply go unmentioned in the many documents that

93 It is important to note that Jesuit historians like Poncelet and Brouwers have given the female patrons their due, at least in terms of being the source of funds for the project. It is modern art historians who tend to give all or most of the credit Godfried, which has led to some false conclusions. For example, David Freedberg misquotes Papenbroeck's line *Praecelluerunt autem hoc in genere sorores Houtappeliae, quae providi a multis retro mensibus constituerant, fundatum a se piisque parentibus suis sacellum* to omit the word *parentibus* (obfuscating the original meaning, that the sisters founded the chapel to their parents) and then reads the word *confundatum*, co-founded, in the inscription before the altar to refer only to Anna Sgrevens and not to the Houtappel sisters. See Freedberg, *Rubens: The Life of Christ after the Passion*, 151. Following Freedberg's lead Gertrude Wilmers also credited Godfried alone with "donating" the chapel, and Van der Stighelen further attributed the Houtappel sisters' 1618 gift of a villa called 't Roy outside of Antwerp (see Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani, S. J., 1561–1629. Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, 213) to their father. Wilmers, *Cornelis Schut (1597–1655): A Flemish Painter of the High Baroque*, 43; Van der Stighelen, *De portretten van Cornelis de Vos (1584/5–1651): een kritische catalogus*, vol. 51, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Schone Kunsten (Brussels: AWLSK, 1990), 242. According patronage to Godfried led both Freedberg and Wilmers to date the chapel to after his death in 1626.

94 'Monumentum Godefridii Houtappel Domini in Ranst fundatoris huius sacelli et piisimae coniugis Corneliae Boot filiarumque virgininum Mariae Annae Christinae Lucretiae et cognatae Annae Sgrevens a quibus confundatum et ornatum hoc Deiparae sacellum et fundatuum in hac urbe collegium Societatis Iesu. Retribuere dignare Domine.'

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do survive.[95] Instead we surely have here a case of daughters both honoring their father and using his name, his patriarchal authority, to navigate around gendered expectations. As women and especially as spiritual daughters, the Houtappels and Anna Sgrevens were expected to embody feminine humility, passivity, and obedience, to shield their gazes and to hold their tongues, to hide themselves behind walls or at least beneath the long black *huycken* (a kind of mantle) that proper Southern Low Countries women wore in public. Inscribing Godfried Houtappel's name before their chapel's altar, with his coat of arms hung on the opposite wall, allowed his daughters and niece to erect a public monument of incredible grandeur without directly claiming all the credit for themselves. Nor is it a coincidence, I think, that the Houtappels and Anna Sgrevens used their fortunes to glorify the very spiritual virtue – that of voluntary religious chastity, communicated in the forms of their patron saints and of the symbols of the Virgin and virginity on all the chapel's surfaces – that had justified their choice to remain unmarried and thus in control of their property, and thereby made their patronage possible in the first place. Keeping themselves one step removed, putting forth a patriarch as patron and having images of their patron saints stand in for themselves, these four women were able to create one of the most artistically remarkable sacramental spaces in the Spanish Low Countries, ensuring their own souls' salvation while furthering the glorious cause of the Counter-Reformation Church.

95 The sole contemporaneous reference to a donation by Godfried in association with the chapel that I have found is Skippon's 1663 statement that the former gave "400,000 *l*" to the Jesuits (see note 79). But here I have to conclude that the author was confused: first, 400,000 pounds is an unthinkably large sum, and second, if the amount was actually meant to be in guilders, it is so close to the total of the known donations and loans made by our women that it seems likely Skippon simply heard this number and assumed the money was given by their father.

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